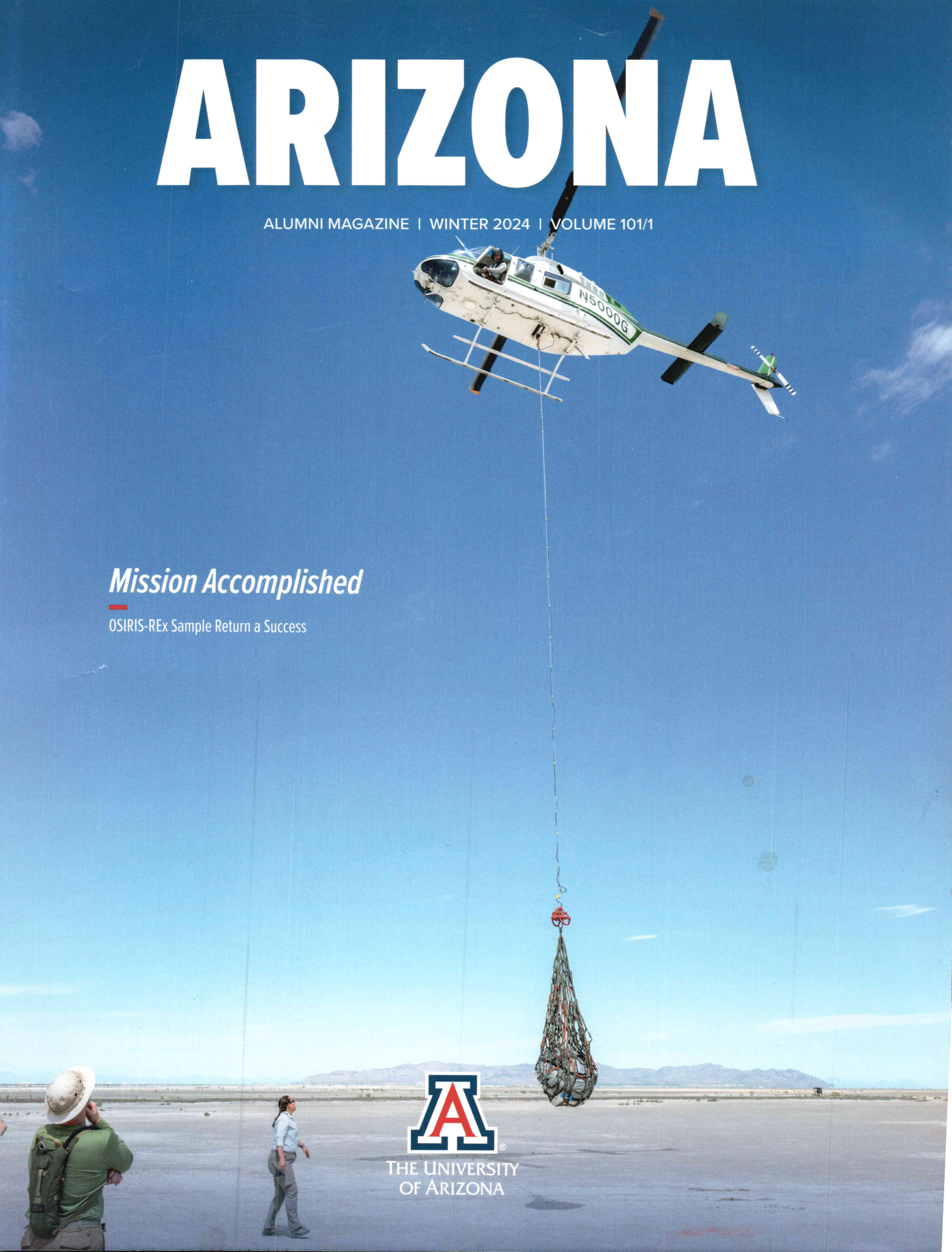
ARIZONA

ALUMNI MAGAZINE | WINTER 2024 | VOLUME 101/1



Mission Accomplished

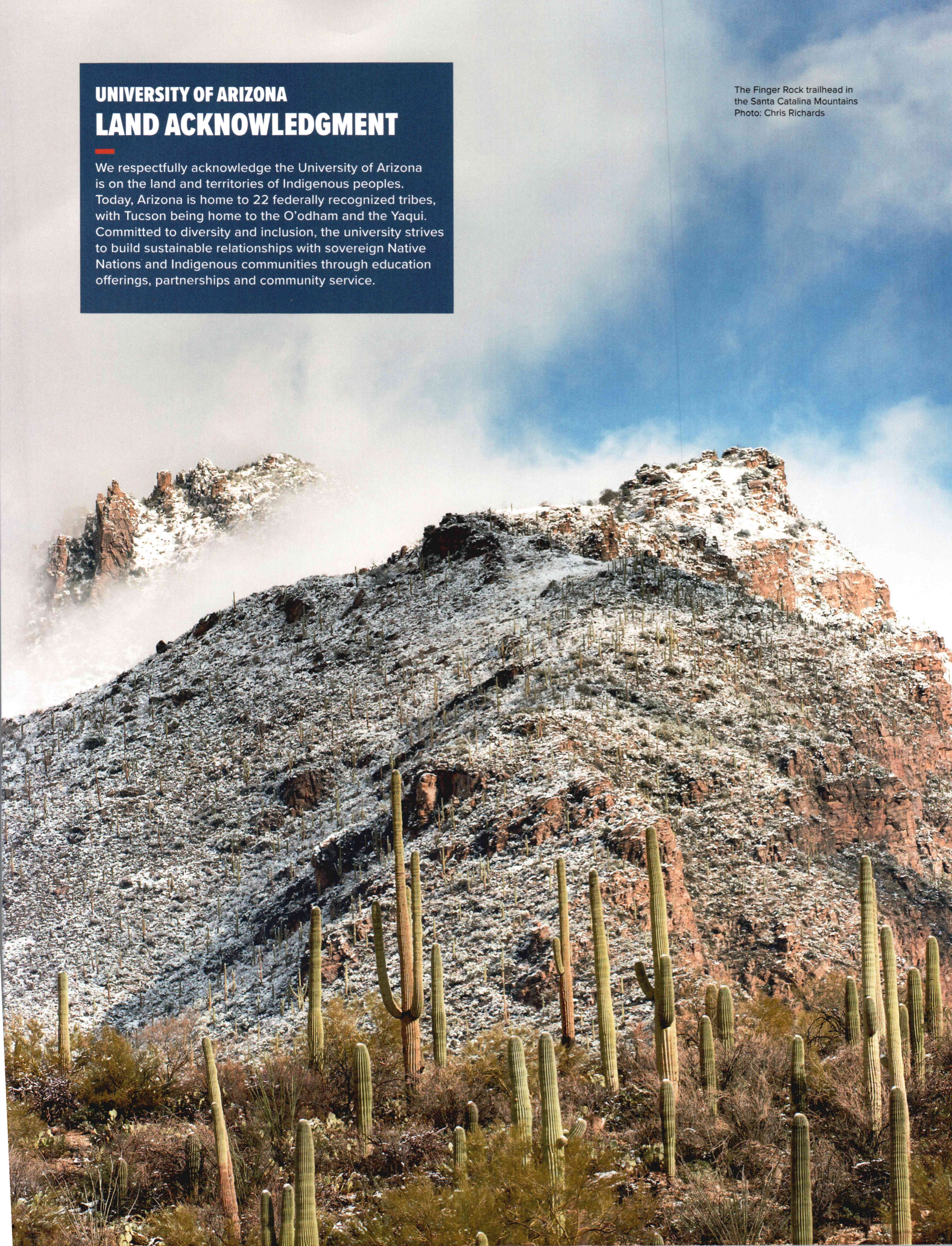
OSIRIS-REx Sample Return a Success

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O'odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the university strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships and community service.



The Finger Rock trailhead in the Santa Catalina Mountains
Photo: Chris Richards

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On the Cover

NASA's historic, Wildcat-led OSIRIS-REx mission reached an exclamation point with the return of rocks and dust from the asteroid Bennu on Sept. 24. In our lead photo for this issue of the magazine, a helicopter transports these capsule-held bits of Bennu to a cleanroom after the capsule landed in Utah. On-scene commander of recovery Jasmine Nakayama looks on. Photo: NASA. The image was slightly modified to fit the available space.

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'A LIFE IN PICTURES'

Now in a show at the Center for Creative Photography, W. Eugene Smith's images — of a muddied Black nurse midwife serving impoverished South Carolinians and of mercury-poisoned families in the Japanese town of Minamata, among others — engendered empathy and outrage among viewers, spurring change.



Photo: Chris Richards

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TASTING NOTES

Across Southern Arizona and within Tucson, a UNESCO City of Gastronomy, Wildcat alumni contribute to a food and beverage scene offering a striking array of flavors. Whether baking bread or making mead, the alums share a close attention to both history and place.

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SOLUTIONS FOR A CHANGING CLIMATE

A university commission on agriculture and food production in a drying climate has made concrete suggestions for how the Colorado River region can move forward amid drought. We check in with commission member Sharon B. Megdal and alumna Amelia Flores '08, each a leading voice on water policy.



Photo: Adobe Stock

ARIZONA
PHILANTHROPY AND ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

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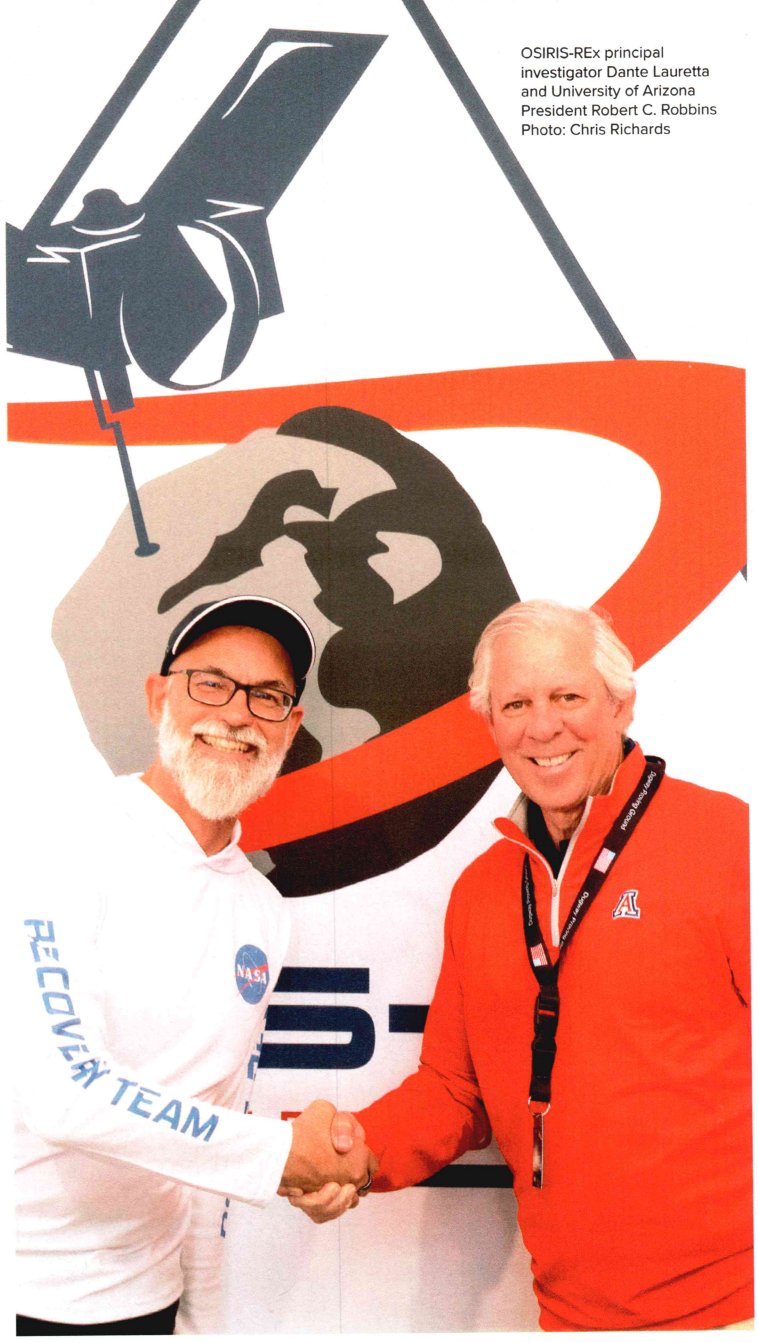
Dear Wildcats,

The University of Arizona is an incredible place, and these past few months we have demonstrated that with outstanding, world-changing news. One such example is the successful completion of the OSIRIS-REx mission with the delivery of an asteroid sample for the first time by a U.S. mission.

The success does not stop there. From the earth to the sky, we have accomplished many things that you may have heard about in the news. Examples include the casting of the final segment of the Giant Magellan Telescope by the Richard F. Caris Mirror Lab, which has its home under Arizona Stadium. The GMT is set to be the largest telescope created to date. We also are very proud of the long-awaited turnaround by our football program, which filled the seats of that same stadium with proud Wildcat fans. We also graduated our first class of veterinarians in August, took new steps to mitigate the shortage of health care workers in the state, and launched the public phase of a $3 billion fundraising campaign to write the next chapter of the university's story. You can find details on all of those topics and more in this issue of the magazine.

You also may have seen the recent news coverage about the University of Arizona's Days Cash on Hand (DCOH), one measure of our financial health. Our DCOH is under the amount set by Arizona Board of Regents policy, which has understandably caused some concern. However, news and discussions surrounding the university's financial situation also have unfortunately led to several inaccurate assumptions and misunderstandings. I want to emphasize that the university is not in financial jeopardy and that the investments we have made have been successful in the furtherance of our strategic goals for the future of the institution. While this is a challenge we are addressing, the university's future remains strong.

In particular, over the past several years, we have enrolled the largest, most diverse and most qualified classes in university history; improved retention and graduation rates; and experienced record years in research activity, with an estimate of more than $900 million in research this past year, placing us among the top in the country. While we address our financial issues, we will continue to build on these and other successes to ensure the University of Arizona remains one of the nation's premier public research universities.



OSIRIS-REx principal investigator Dante Lauretta and University of Arizona President Robert C. Robbins
Photo: Chris Richards

Thank you for your continued support, and I hope you will join me in cheering on the Wildcats as we go into our final winter and spring sports seasons as part of the Pac-12.

Bear Down and Go, 'Cats!

Robert C. Robbins

Robert C. Robbins, M.D.
President
The University of Arizona

President Robbins presented the university's financial action plan to the Arizona Board of Regents Dec. 13, 2023. For more information, visit the university's Financial Updates website, www.arizona.edu/financial-updates, which includes the report presented to ABOR and additional resources.



Old Main on the UArizona Mall
Photo: University of Arizona

FUEL WONDER

THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

Wonder is at the heart of University of Arizona stories. It's what drives our students, graduates and faculty to explore and discover more. And it's what keeps us evolving our university to better serve them.

The Fuel Wonder campaign is a $3 billion fundraising effort to invest in key priorities and initiatives outlined in the university's strategic plan. It's the most ambitious campaign in university history and will shape UArizona's future. By investing in students, faculty and programs, we enrich the ecosystem that makes innovation possible, enable programs to make meaningful differences in our communities and provide students with educational experiences that they can't get anywhere else.

Join the University of Arizona community in uncovering the unknown, unimagined and unprecedented.

The public phase of the campaign was launched during a news conference held in the Bear Down Building on Nov. 3, during Homecoming weekend, when $118.65 million in gifts toward the $3 billion goal were announced.

The moderator was Alex Flanagan '93, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in media arts. She is a former sportscaster who has worked for NBC Sports, NFL Network, ESPN and Fox Sports.

"I think what really sticks out for me is just how much growth this university has had since I graduated 30 years ago," Flanagan said at the press conference. "And to see and hear the incredible things that are happening on the campus and in the community — it makes me really proud and excited."

Flanagan was joined by a Gamma Phi Beta sorority sister, Marianne Cracchiolo Mago '93, president and CEO of the Steele Foundation. Cracchiolo Mago, who also earned a bachelor's degree in media arts, is a campaign co-chair with Terry Lundgren '75, former CEO of Macy's Inc. A significant contribution from the Steele Foundation marked the first philanthropic support for the Center for Advanced Molecular and Immunological Therapies, known as CAMI.

"The goal with CAMI is to develop cell- and gene-based therapies to combat disease — this time to unlock the human immunome, not just for one person in a clinical trial but for numerous others, for anyone who needs it. So, for us, this is what we at Steele Foundation would definitely call a moonshot, after COVID-19 especially," Cracchiolo Mago said at the press conference.

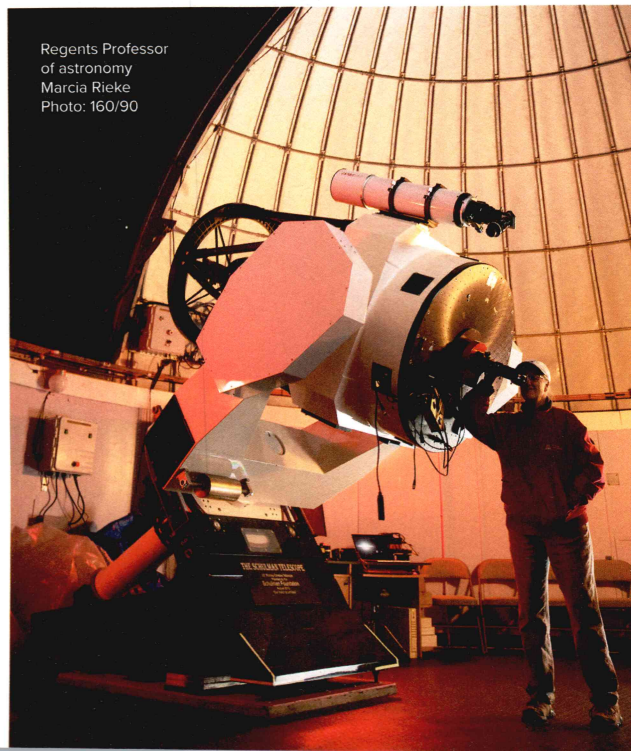
Lundgren shared his own story during a panel discussion, with students, alumni, donors and faculty and staff members in attendance.

"Like many of our U of A students, I was the first in my family and the only in my large family to actually go to college. So, it was a privilege for me to be able to come to the University of Arizona," Lundgren said. "And I had no idea what a career in retail might look like when I was 20 years old or how it might shape my own future. But with investments through the Fuel Wonder campaign, we hope to educate our students and expose them to successful business leaders and ultimately prepare them for an exciting career."

Flanagan, Cracchiolo Mago and Lundgren joined University of Arizona President Robert C. Robbins and John-Paul Roczniak, president and CEO of the University of Arizona Foundation, to



Biosphere 2
Photo: 160/90



Regents Professor of astronomy Marcia Rieke
Photo: 160/90

announce gifts from the Baird Foundation, Patricia and Bruce Bartlett, Jim and Vicki Click, John Compton, Michael and Sheri Hummel, Ellen Kaye, Mona Kreaden and Paul Lipton, Humberto and Czarina Lopez, John and Adrienne Mars, the Waverley Street Foundation, the Tucson Foundations, and several donors who asked that their giving remain anonymous.

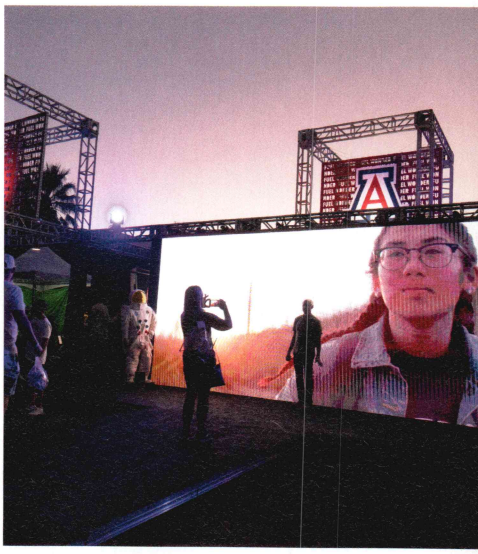
Students in adaptive athletics programs cheered the announcement of a $6.5 million gift from Jim and Vicki Click supporting adaptive athletics programs.

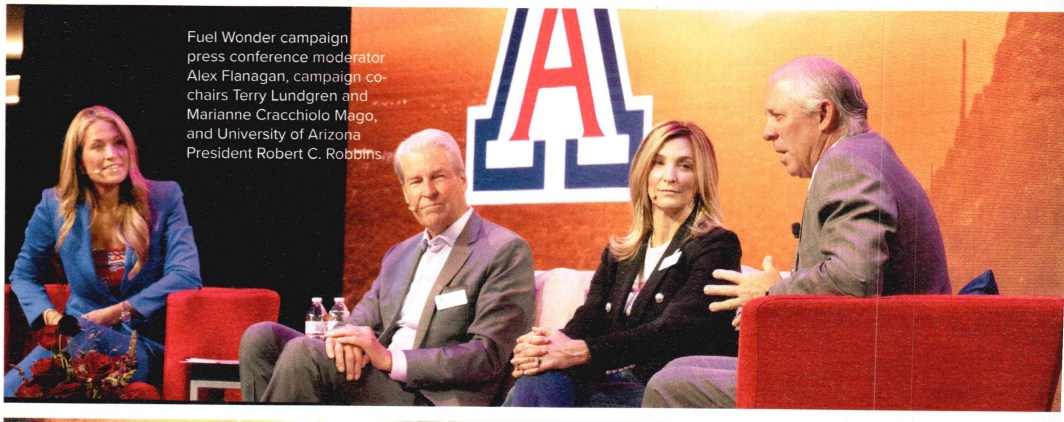
"Every gift we have received since Jan. 1, 2017, is part of Fuel Wonder," Roczniak said. "You can see from the gifts we are announcing the range of causes that are meaningful to our alumni and friends. And although we are announcing some large gifts today, the ongoing charitable support of annual donors has a huge impact on campus programs as well. I am grateful to all of them and proud to share the breadth of impact philanthropy has at this great institution."

Learn more about the Fuel Wonder campaign and ways to give at **fuelwonder.arizona.edu.**



Photos: Chris Richards



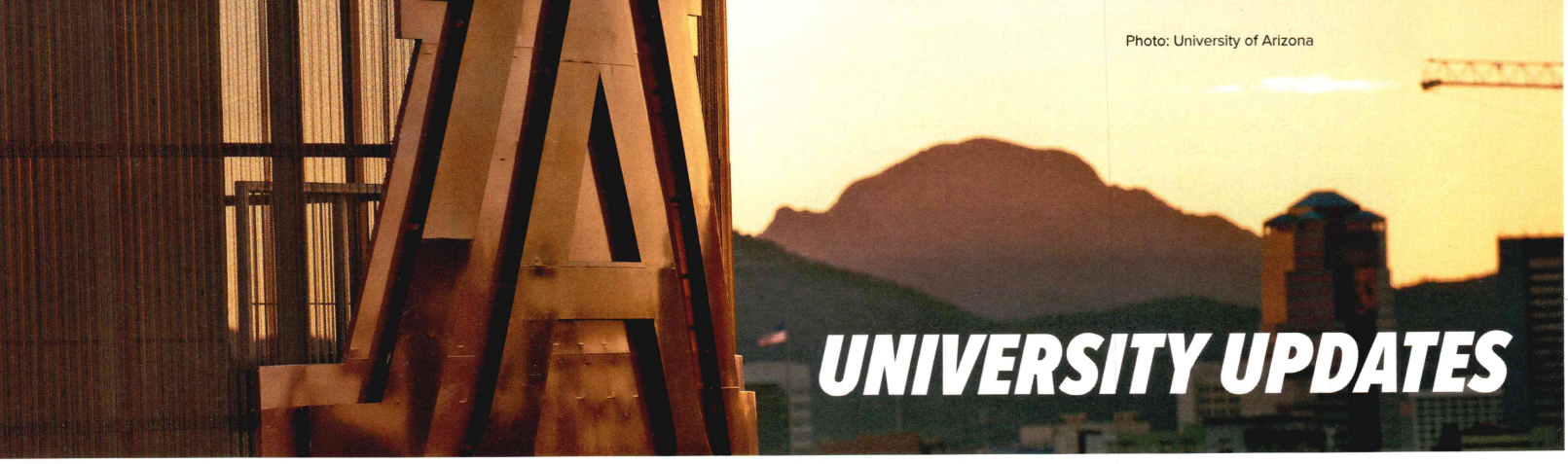


Fuel Wonder campaign press conference moderator Alex Flanagan, campaign co-chairs Terry Lundgren and Marianne Cracchiolo Mago, and University of Arizona President Robert C. Robbins.

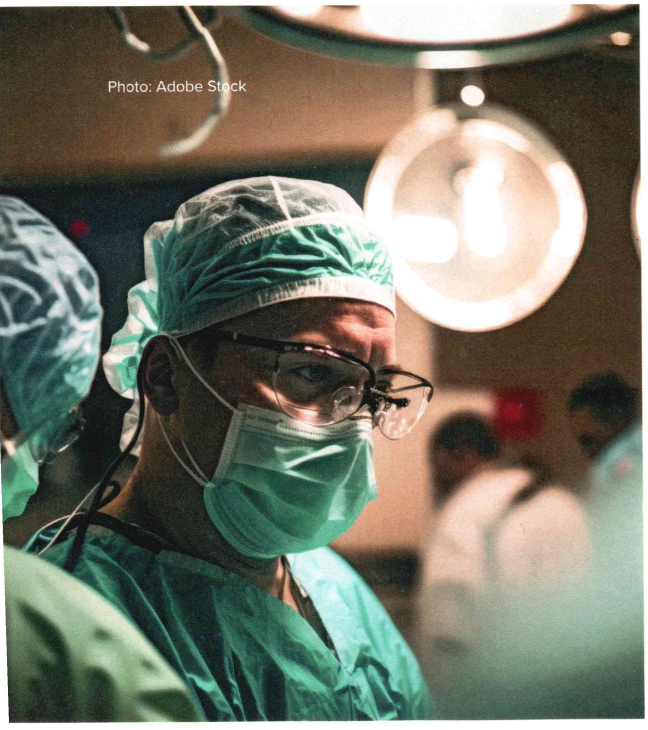


'I am incredibly grateful to the thousands of donors who have contributed to our future through the Fuel Wonder campaign. It is especially meaningful to announce this campaign during Homecoming weekend, a time when we invite alumni back to campus to reunite with the extended Wildcat community. I am so proud of how the work of our students, faculty and staff inspire alumni and friends to give back so generously.'

— University of Arizona President Robert C. Robbins



UNIVERSITY UPDATES



New College of Health Sciences will lift barriers to caring

By Matthew Morris

University of Arizona Health Sciences is addressing critical health care needs in Arizona with the launch of a new College of Health Sciences, approved by the Arizona Board of Regents last June.

The fledgling college will offer five graduate degrees, training future genetic counselors, physician assistants, physical therapists, midwives and clinical translational scientists.

Should they stay in Arizona, the college's graduates will energize a depleted workforce. One in 5 Maricopa County residents worries about access to health care, and across the state, only 40% of primary care needs are met.

"This new college will augment the educational programs we currently offer through our two accredited medical schools and our colleges of nursing, pharmacy and public health. The health care professionals and research scientists that graduate from the College of Health Sciences will play a vital role in meeting the needs of Arizona residents and alleviating health disparities throughout the state," says Michael Dake, senior vice president for UArizona Health Sciences.

Pump up the volume on topological acoustics

By Matthew Morris

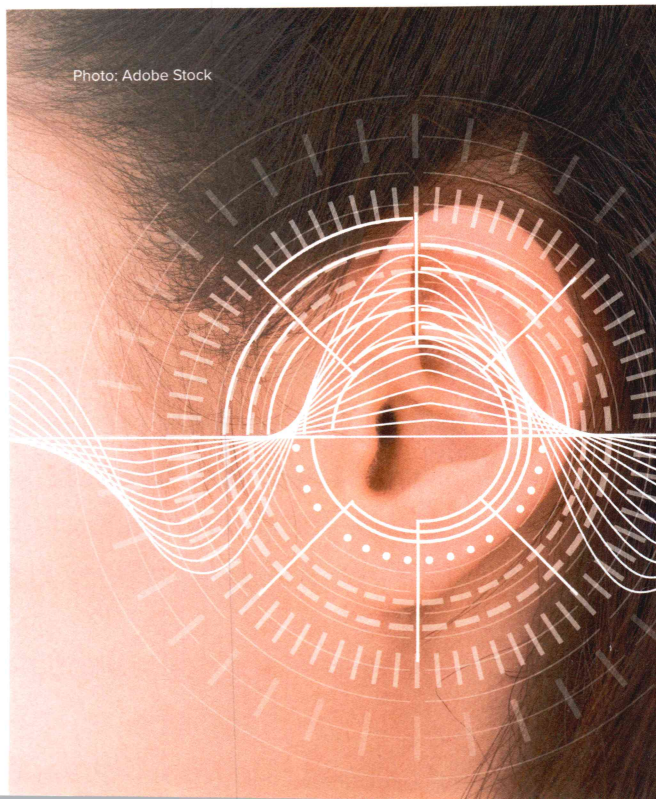
High-speed cellphones with longer battery life. Heightened awareness of dry soil in forests susceptible to fire. Enhanced detection of diseases in tissue and defects in construction.

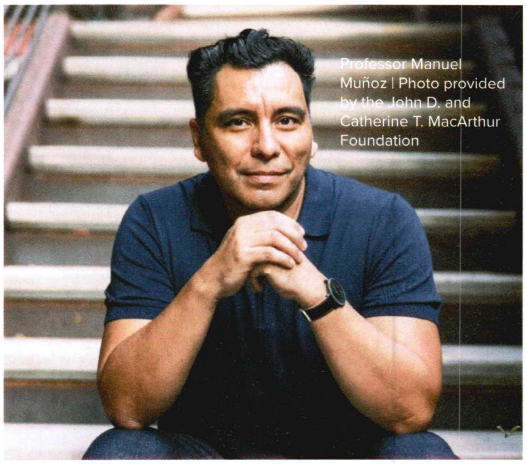
Topological acoustics, a developing field of scientific research, could up the volume on improvements that will reverberate across society. And with a $30 million grant from the National Science Foundation, the University of Arizona will be at the leading edge of what Pierre Deymier, professor of materials science and engineering, calls a "quiet revolution."

The NSF grant will fund the university's New Frontiers of Sound Science and Technology Center for its first five years. The center also was tabbed for a $30 million funding option for the five years after that.

"Topological acoustics exploits properties of sound waves that have remained hidden," says Deymier, the center's director. "It harnesses the full power of acoustic waves."

The center will include a mentorship program introducing students of diverse backgrounds to the field.





Professor Manuel Muñoz | Photo provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

UArizona professor awarded $800,000 MacArthur Fellowship

By Zoe Montano

Manuel Muñoz, fiction writer and professor of English at the University of Arizona, is one of 20 recipients awarded the $800,000, no-strings-attached MacArthur "genius grant" this year.

Inspired by his upbringing in a family of Chicano farmworkers, Muñoz's work was recognized for illustrating the complex lives of Mexican Americans living in California's Central Valley.

The peer-nominated grant spans five years and allows fellows to focus on finding inspiration.

"I want to be guided by my creativity and the muse when it strikes me. The work has to speak to me, not to others, and I love that the fellowship is going to give me that liberty," Muñoz says.

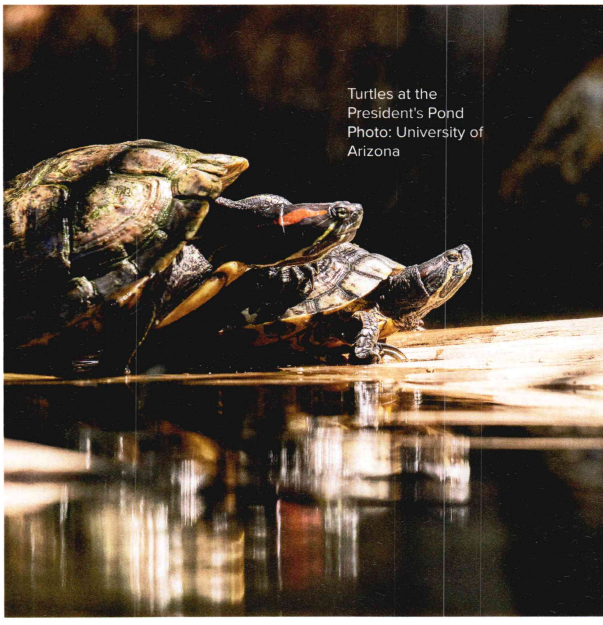
Turtle Pond gets a renovation

By Sarah Beaudry and University Communications

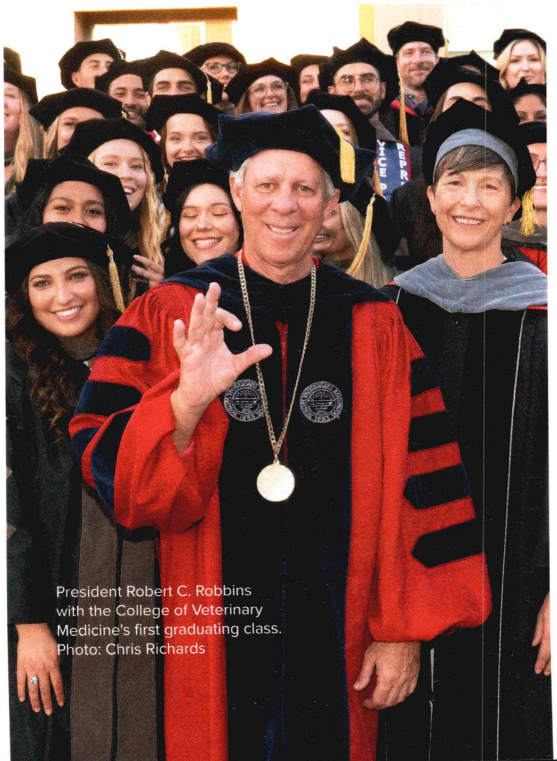
Hidden near a grove of olive trees on the west side of campus is a comfortable spot to sit and observe some of nature's oldest reptiles — turtles — basking in the sun.

The recently renovated President's Pond is considered a campus treasure both for its charm and its history. Also known as the Turtle Pond, the water feature and surrounding garden were once part of the property of a Queen Anne-style home that served as the university president's official residence from 1894 until it was razed in 1937 to make way for Gila Hall, just to the east.

Built in 1933, the pond anchors one corner of the Campus Historic District near Second Street and Park Avenue and is a preserved and protected historic and cultural resource. The recent improvements, which include a small brick-lined plaza filled with decomposed granite with space for commemorative benches, were funded by donations to the Campus Arboretum. An anonymous alumni couple who used to meet at the pond between classes are the primary benefactors.



Turtles at the President's Pond Photo: University of Arizona



President Robert C. Robbins with the College of Veterinary Medicine's first graduating class. Photo: Chris Richards

Inaugural veterinary class makes history

By Zoe Montano

Over 100 students earned their doctor of veterinary medicine degree from the University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine on Aug. 24.

Launched in 2020, the state's first and only public veterinary medicine program stands out due to its unique curriculum. The three-year program allows students to interact with live animals from Day 1, unlike conventional four-year programs, where students don't get hands-on experience with animals until their third year.

The program is addressing the need for veterinarians locally and nationally and positioning the university as a veterinary education leader. Its success is evident, with over 47% of graduates securing internships and jobs before graduation, showcasing a deep understanding of animal biology, genetics, nutrition and diseases. Graduates specialize in emergency care, equine medicine, small-animal general practice and more.

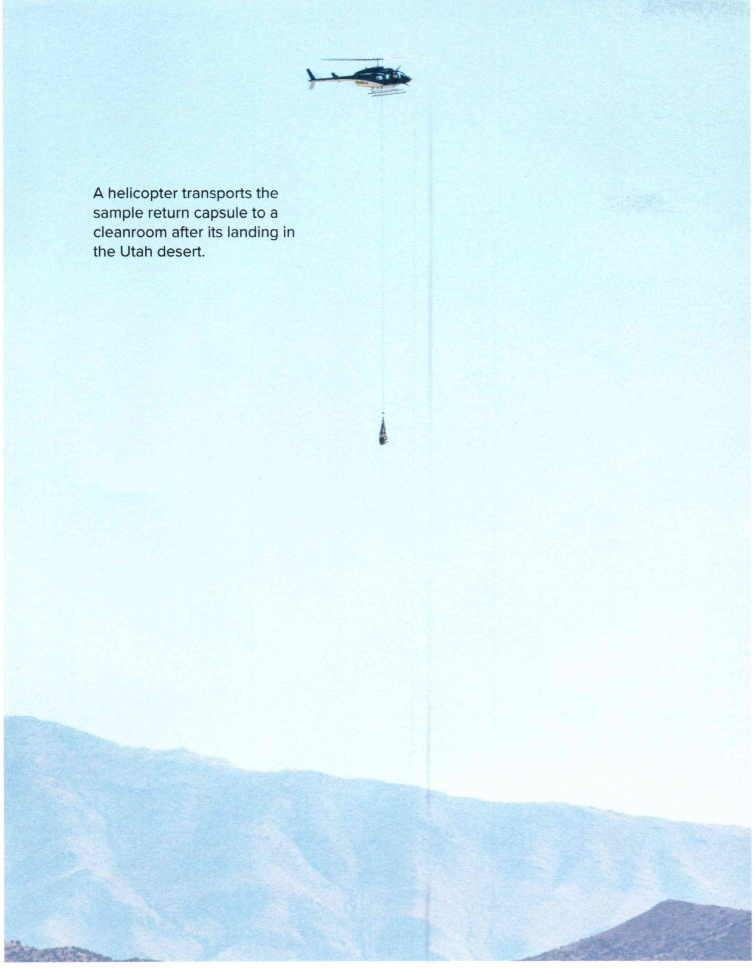
"I am deeply grateful and excited to celebrate this milestone with the entire community," said Julie Funk, the college's dean. "And I cannot wait to see what this inaugural class achieves as they move forward with their careers."



Principal investigator Dante Lauretta, on-scene commander of recovery Jasmine Nakayama, and NASA sample-return capsule-science lead Scott Sandford of the OSIRIS-REx team
Photos: Chris Richards

ASTEROID BENNU SPEAKS

A first look at NASA's asteroid Bennu sample suggests the presence of water and carbon.
By NASA and University Communications



A helicopter transports the sample return capsule to a cleanroom after its landing in the Utah desert.



Mike Moreau, deputy project manager for OSIRIS-REx at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

Studies of the sample from 4.5-billion-year-old asteroid Bennu that was brought to Earth by NASA's Wildcat-led OSIRIS-REx mission show evidence of water and high-carbon content, together indicating that the building blocks of life may be found in the rock.

NASA announced the finding on Oct. 11 from its Johnson Space Center in Houston, where leadership showed off the sample material for the first time since it landed in the Utah desert on Sept. 24. The finding was part of a preliminary assessment by the OSIRIS-REx team.

"As we peer into the secrets preserved within the dust and rocks of Bennu, we unlock a time capsule that offers profound insights into our solar system's origins," said Dante Lauretta, OSIRIS-REx principal investigator and University of Arizona Regents Professor of planetary sciences. "We draw closer to unraveling our cosmic heritage."

Among the motivations driving the mission is the desire to understand the origins of Earth's habitability, Lauretta said. The current understanding of what makes a world suitable for life is abundant surface liquid water.

"When Earth formed, especially after the impact that spun off the moon, the water and carbon were lost from our planet," Lauretta added. "Our leading hypothesis is that asteroids later delivered the building blocks of life." ◆



Mission implementation systems engineer Anjani Polit, Lauretta, Sanford and Jason Dworkin, project scientist for the mission at Goddard



Lauretta speaks about the sample return.



Part of the final segment of the primary mirror required to complete the Giant Magellan Telescope
Photos: Chris Richards

GLITTERING CARGO

The last piece of the world's largest telescope takes shape at UArizona.
By Hannah Hindley, Steward Observatory

To make one of the world's largest mirrors requires a lot of glass — 80 crates of it, to be exact, each containing 25 cases. And delivering that glass means safeguarding it on double springs and distributing it among the holds of four semitrucks.

Last September, this fleet of trucks parked outside Arizona Stadium, whose basement houses the University of Arizona's Richard F. Caris Mirror Laboratory, and unloaded its glittering cargo. Forklifts trundled across polished cement floors, carrying 20 tons of gleaming borosilicate glass cubes, dense and clear as cut ice. Careful hands sorted the glass, discarding impurities, and loaded it into a rotating furnace 40 feet across.

Beginning in October, technicians heated the glass to 2,129 degrees Fahrenheit — the temperature of flowing lava — and set the furnace to spin. It was the start of a four-year process of meticulously engineered melting, casting and polishing that will result in a lightweight mirror nearly three stories high when stood on end.

The mirror will be shipped 5,000 miles to the Las Campanas Observatory in Chile's high desert to become the final segment of the primary mirror required to complete the Giant Magellan Telescope — the world's largest telescope.

At 50 million times the power of the human eye and 10 times the resolution of NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, the GMT will give astronomers glimpses of the earliest, most distant stars and galaxies in the ongoing quest to understand the origins of life in the universe. ◆



After casting, the glass will undergo an exacting polishing process similar to the one shown here.



The glass was heated to 2,129 degrees Farenheit in this rotating furnace.



A military veteran bonds with a service dog. Photo: K-9 for Warriors

ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTION

UArizona research reveals the health benefits of human-animal interactions. | By Tim Vanderpool

It's hard not to be happy when we glimpse our favorite wagging tail or hear that familiar purr. But just how much does interacting with pets boost our well-being?

Until recently, science had no hard answers to that question. But the study of the human-pet bond is now growing exponentially, and the University of Arizona is at the forefront of the research. It boasts not only an extensive human-animal interaction faculty group but also one of field's top experts in Maggie O'Haire, associate dean at the College of Veterinary Medicine.

O'Haire explains that the leading theory for why people find animals soothing is what's called the "biophilia hypothesis." According to this theory, because humans evolved with animals in nature, she says, "we have an innate propensity to be attuned to and desire to be around animals and nature, or lifelike things. Although we are not around nature as much as we once were, we still seek it out. Our brains still respond uniquely to sights of animals or nature. In many cases, this can have a calming effect on us, because it is a positive, external focus of attention."

Physiologically, this plays out in our hormones, specifically cortisol — which impacts our stress and energy levels — and oxytocin, also known as the "love hormone" for the safe, nurtured way it makes us feel. Learning precisely how animal interactions affect those hormones offers great potential for helping people who've experienced trauma, such as combat veterans. To this end, O'Haire's lab recently secured a $3.2 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to study how service dogs can benefit veterans suffering from PTSD.

Early results are encouraging. Although cortisol helps most of us get moving in the morning, that role is impaired when stress becomes chronic from conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder. However, using saliva samples from veterans, O'Haire showed that their morning cortisol levels returned to normal after living with their service dogs. So powerful is this effect that even looking at pictures of animals can reduce anxiety in people.

She also found that if a little pet love helps a bit, lots of that love can have dramatic impacts. Study subjects obviously enjoyed these benefits; tracking devices revealed that the veterans spent more than 80% of each day with their service animals. That level of bonding "is a finding in itself," she says. "Who else in your life would you willingly choose to spend 20 hours a day with?"

Other discoveries are equally promising. For instance, "in a prior study where we followed service dogs for just three months, we were able to see clinically significant differences in levels of PTSD symptomatology for those veterans who had a service dog," O'Haire says. The veterans also tracked their moods with a smartphone app, and O'Haire says those with service animals reported more positive emotions, fewer negative emotions, and fewer panic attacks.

Of course, you don't have to be a veteran to benefit from animal interactions. Other studies from UArizona human-animal interaction researchers have shown that programs where students (or children) interact with animals can greatly reduce school-related and social anxiety within a mere 10 minutes.

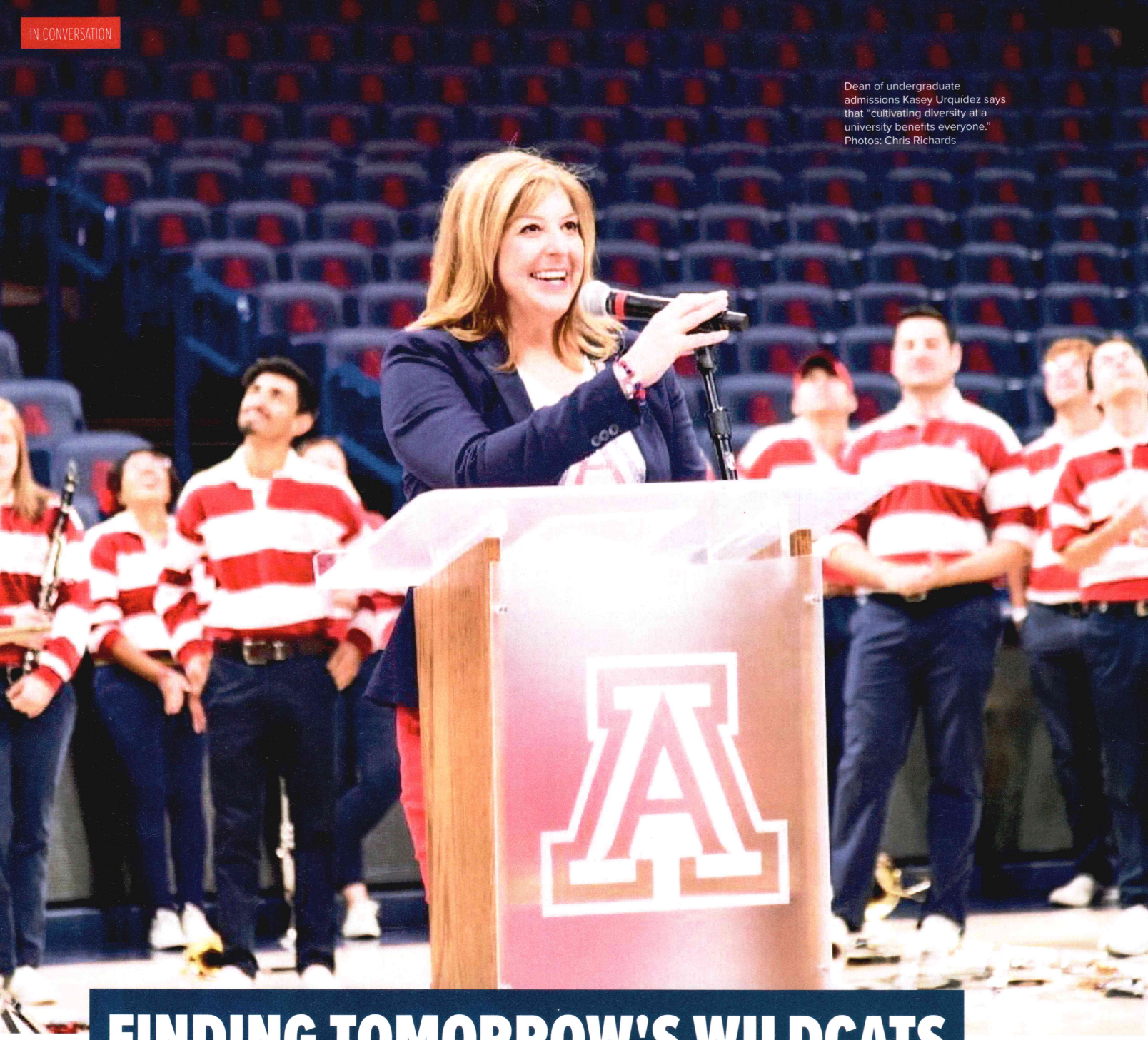
Such findings have driven explosive growth in this field, and UArizona continues to lead the way. "We are excited to be creating the world's largest group of faculty dedicated to this topic," O'Haire says. "Historically, there have been isolated individuals doing work on the human side alone or on the animal side alone. Here, for the first time, we have a critical mass of experts on both sides working together."

And both sides will keep their eyes on a common objective. "Our overall goal is to understand the impact of human-animal interaction on human health and animal health, so that we can make a better world for animals and their people," she says. "As a College of Veterinary Medicine, we hope to equip our future veterinarians with the tools they need to not just help animals but to also help the people in those animals' lives."

To support this research, visit **give.uafoundation.org/humananimalresearch**. ◆



Kerri Rodriguez, assistant professor at the College of Veterinary Medicine; professor Maggie O'Haire, associate dean for research of the college; and Hendrix. Photo: Kevin Doerr



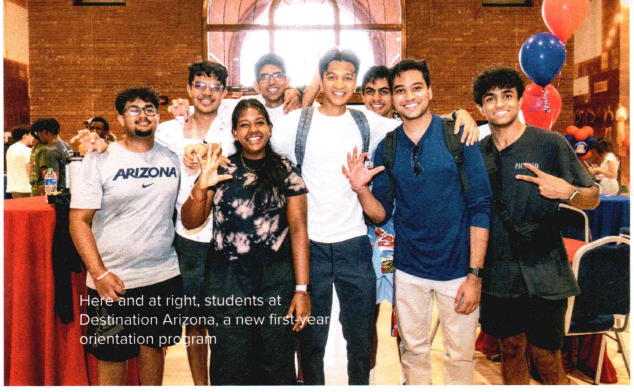
Dean of undergraduate admissions Kasey Urquídez says that "cultivating diversity at a university benefits everyone." Photos: Chris Richards

FINDING TOMORROW'S WILDCATS

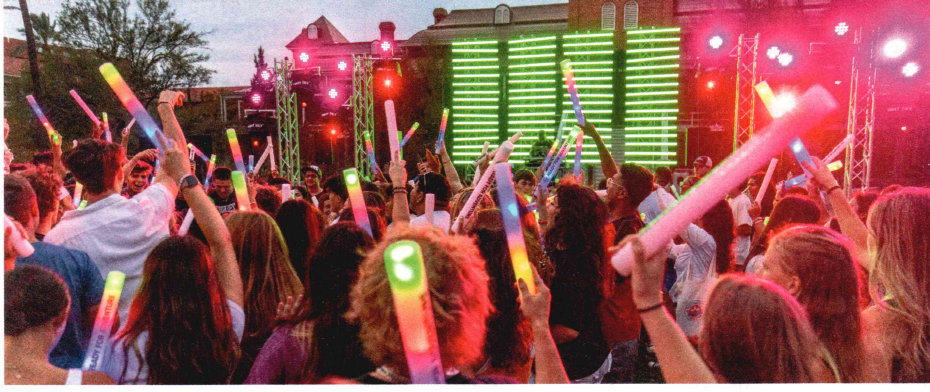
A conversation with Dean Kasey Urquídez | By Riley Beck

Kasey Urquídez '94 '02 — the University of Arizona's chief enrollment officer, vice president for enrollment management and dean of undergraduate admissions — is a two-degree Wildcat who benefited from the New Start program as a first-generation undergraduate. While she originally planned to pursue a career in counseling, her on-campus job inspired her to focus on the impact she could make through higher education.

With the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action, the country has looked for guidance to those universities that have increased rates of diversity on their campuses in recent years without affirmative action programs. UArizona has been chief among those institutions. Dean Urquídez sat down with us to talk about how the university cultivates diversity through outreach, resources for students and a strong commitment to Wildcat culture.



Here and at right, students at Destination Arizona, a new first-year orientation program



Q: How do you define diversity, and why is it important?

Diversity is bringing together people from all over the world with different cultural backgrounds, lifestyles, experiences and interests. It encompasses racial, ethnic and socioeconomic differences, but it's much more than that. Diversity is important to learning and the growth of our students as well as the world we live and connect in. Cultivating diversity at a university benefits everyone by creating a more inclusive, enriching and intellectually stimulating environment. It prepares students for the challenges of navigating a global society, contributes to academic excellence and fosters a sense of belonging and equity across the campus community.

Q: From your perspective, what makes a great incoming class of students, and what goes into building that class each year?

We look for students who are a great fit as Wildcats. These are students who want to challenge themselves at an elite, global research university with faculty who genuinely care. Part of building the class involves trying to make a lot of smaller environments within our large environment, so that students have opportunities they wouldn't have at a smaller school, but they can still connect with a sense of community.

Scholarships and financial aid are also a critical part of recruiting strong incoming cohorts. Removing financial barriers is a key part of recruiting talented students across all identity categories to the university.

Q: Looking at enrollment numbers, how has diversity at the university changed since 2010, when Arizona state law prohibited the consideration of race or ethnicity in university admissions?

In 2011, the incoming class of 7,300 students had 39% diversity — students who are nonwhite, in this case — which was actually still a large degree of diversity relative to other universities at that time. As of 2023, [the] almost 9,200 incoming students, a significant increase, had 49% diversity. We have also been a Hispanic-Serving Institution since 2018. This means that at least 25% of our students identify as Hispanic or Latinx. Right now, our student population is about 26% Hispanic or Latinx.

Q: What programs that support students who are minoritized and/or historically underserved are you most proud of?

The Arizona Assurance program offers approximately 100 Arizona residents from low-income families per year financial support for education and living expenses. It includes wraparound services through the Thrive Center. The Arizona Promise program is also noteworthy; it offers last-dollar funding that covers Pell Grant gaps for eligible students.

Another great resource is the Arizona Native Scholars Grant. This funding is available to Indigenous students from Arizona or one of Arizona's 22 federally recognized tribes. It covers the gap between what the student is offered through their FAFSA [federal student aid] application and the cost of tuition and fees. One benefit that is unique to the way we implement this program is that any tribal aid the student receives is not included in that calculation.

Q: What is Destination Arizona, and how does it support minoritized students?

Destination Arizona goes beyond a regular orientation and is meant to offer "just in time" information to ensure our students are set up for success on their Wildcat journeys. We also try to help students begin to form a sense of belonging and to cultivate a culture of mutual respect. Concurrently, we offer a family conference, and we are sure to provide sessions and resources in Spanish. Overall, Destination Arizona programming provides students tools and resources they need to advocate for themselves, both academically and personally, with confidence.

Q: If we visited your office, what would we see?

You would see how committed we all are to the university and surrounding community. You would see us answering calls and personally reading applications — we had 56,000 first-year applications alone last year. And you wouldn't see everyone, because so many folks in our office are doing outreach and recruitment in the community to make sure families understand that the university is within reach. Some people think we're trying to figure out who we can deny, but the reality is that we're trying to help students make their way to us, and we have a dedicated team that makes sure everyone has what they need to join the Wildcat family. ◆



Students are often the face of UArizona community-engaged research, such as this partnership with the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona. Photo provided by Melanie Hingle

FOOD AS MEDICINE

A UArizona researcher forges partnerships to tackle diabetes in Arizona communities. | By Kim Stoll

According to the Arizona Department of Health Services, there are almost 600,000 adults living with diabetes in Arizona, and it's estimated that another 2 million have prediabetes. Meanwhile, Arizona ranks third highest among the 10 western states for food insecurity. Through her community-engaged research and partnerships, Melanie Hingle, a nutrition scientist, public health researcher and registered dietitian nutritionist in the University of Arizona College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences, is working to address these challenges.

"My lab is out there in the world," Hingle says.

Hingle works with community organizations that share the goal of diabetes prevention and management. Some partners, like El Rio Community Health Center, have an explicit focus on helping people manage their conditions and prevent disease. For others, like the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, the goal of diabetes management is more indirectly connected to their mission.

"A lot of their clients suffer from diet-sensitive illness, and they wanted to do something," Hingle says.

For more than five years, Hingle has worked collaboratively with the two organizations to design food-based interventions to help combat diabetes for individuals also facing food insecurity.

"In the last decade or so, it became really clear to me that our work in diabetes prevention and management wouldn't go anywhere unless we are addressing food and nutrition security as well," Hingle says.

She describes food access, proximity to grocery stores and lack of financial security as major barriers to optimal nutrition. People with few resources, she says, may have to choose between buying fresh food, purchasing medication or paying utility bills.



Photo: Adobe Stock

"It's impossible tradeoffs that people have to make when they just don't have a lot," she says. "The goal of our research and outreach is to help people to improve their health by connecting them with nutrition, food and medical resources. We are exploring whether something as simple as helping people secure enough nutritious food for their family can also help them to manage their diabetes."

Hingle says that early in her career she thought diabetes management was just a matter of the right behavioral support.

"That was very naive of me to think that. Individual choices and behavior play a part, but there are a lot of factors beyond the individual that influence health," she says. "Access to food and health care, educational opportunities, and the social and environmental context in which people live and work play a major role in health."

Students in the School of Nutrition Sciences and Wellness who are training to be health professionals contribute to the community partnerships as well. Hingle says the school wants its students to understand how people navigate food and nutrition choices and provide support in culturally-responsive and budget-conscious ways. Culinary medicine, she explains, is a subdiscipline of nutrition that does just that. The emerging field, which is based on the idea of "food as medicine," integrates nutrition science with culinary techniques and medical practice — with the goal of treating and preventing chronic, diet-sensitive conditions.

With the award of a five-year training grant from the USDA, Hingle worked with 20 undergraduate scholars as they participated in a series of experiences, including research and community outreach.

They participated in culinary medicine courses and, most recently, helped coauthor an open educational resource in culinary medicine — a free digital textbook for students and the public, to be published early next year.

Hingle is passionate about getting nutrition information into more people's hands — and ensuring they're connected with the resources that they need to act on that information.

"It's fine if I tell you this certain food is healthy, but if you can't access it, if you don't know where to find it or don't have the money to buy it — or if you don't know how to cook it and enjoy it — it's not going to be very helpful to you," she explains.

Hingle is working to expand culinary medicine education at the university by partnering with Farshad Fani Marvasti, a practicing physician and director of public health, prevention and health promotion at the UArizona College of Medicine – Phoenix. Marvasti has been developing culinary medicine and nutrition programs for medical students, and he has joined Hingle on a grant initiative from Novo Nordisk, a global health care organization, to expand existing culinary medicine programs across Arizona. They are partnering with communities around the state to pilot new courses.

Hingle says food and nutrition access can affect everyone, not just a certain group of people. "The idea of food as medicine can positively impact everybody," she says.

"Everyone will face health concerns at some point, whether themselves or someone in their family," she says. "And one day they will benefit if their physician or the health professionals they interact with are well versed in nutrition and if food resources are available that they could use to improve their health using diet." ◆



Melanie Bucci, curatorial/museum specialist for the University of Arizona Natural History Collections, teaches a mammalogy class. Photos: Chris Richards

A RARE SPECIMEN

The University of Arizona Natural History Museum | By Riley Beck

Housed throughout two floors of the Biological Sciences East building, the University of Arizona Museum of Natural History encompasses room after room of drawers with tidily organized skins and skeletons and shelved jars of wet specimens. Open one drawer, and several species of bats seem to be sleeping side by side. Walk into another room, and you'll find 1-gallon jar "lots" of the same kind of lizard, each individually tagged and suspended in clear fluid. Among the many mounted and cataloged specimens, there is even a mature desert tortoise.

As one of the top 20 research museums in the country, this gem is not only a rare find for our campus but a valuable resource both for UArizona and for other top-tier institutions of higher learning. The collection is divided into five categories: mammalogy, ornithology (birds), herpetology (amphibians, turtles and reptiles), marine invertebrates, and ichthyology (fish). It is exclusively a research and teaching collection, meaning there are no exhibits for public viewing, but this scientific library is filled with preserved creatures with stories to tell, some dating back 125 years.

This repository, now boasting more than 200,000 specimens, was established in the early 1900s in response to legislation dictating that the state's land-grant college would keep a collection of the territory's flora and fauna. Since then, the museum has developed a significant scientific collection that is invaluable in terms of its specimens and data as well as for the potential that technological advances, such as DNA and isotope testing, will enhance its offerings to scientists.

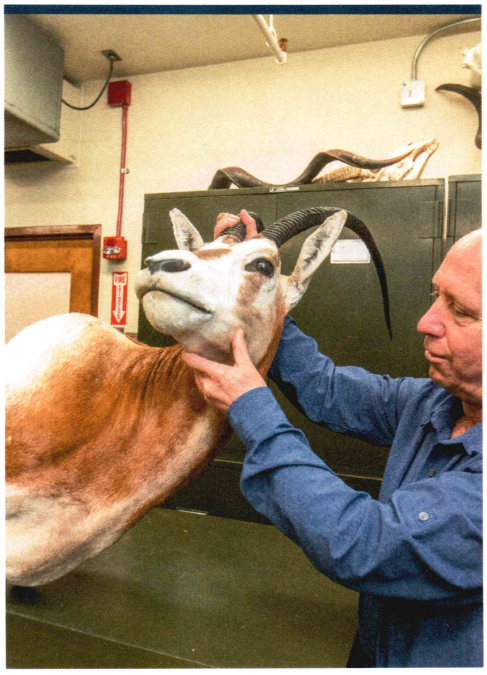
Each specimen has a voucher that notes where it was found and when. This data helps researchers document ranges, the geographic area a species tends to inhabit, and the impact of human activities. In some cases, the documentation of historical ranges can help predict what may happen to a species in response to climate change.

Peter Reinthal, director and curator of the museum, offers the example of picas — small rodents related to rabbits that historically live only near the tops of mountains. As temperatures climb, pica populations are climbing upward on the mountains they inhabit in response, which raises the question of whether they will



Director and curator Peter Reinthal shows off some of the more than 200,000 specimens held in the Museum of Natural History.









face extinction when they can't go any higher to meet their biological needs.

While the department of ecology and evolutionary biology within the College of Science maintains the collection and offers classes that regularly benefit from in-person access to its specimens, researchers across the university and the country utilize the museum for research. One scientist is researching lead poisoning in condors thanks to the museum's impressive cache of this endangered vulture. Another is studying variations in the museum's unmatched collection of bighorn sheep skulls.

And yet another was inspired to conduct novel research upon visiting the museum and noticing significant variation in the coat color of neotomas — a genus of North American rodents that includes pack rats. As it turns out, inhabiting lava flows versus sandy environments influences how light or dark their coats are.

When Reinthal and fellow curator Melanie Bucci are asked about their most impressive individual specimens, they point instead to the sheer diversity of the collection as well as the number of specimens that can't be found anywhere else. The Southwest is one of the most biodiverse places in the United States, they point out — especially in terms of mammals, birds and herps. The fish collection is also especially noteworthy, they explain, because half the freshwater species in the collection are threatened or endangered. And, they add, some specimens in the collection could not be obtained today, either for legal or ecological reasons.

This incredible resource is truly irreplaceable.

To support or learn more about the collection, check out uazcollections.com. ◆



Amplified advanced to the 2023 International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella. Photos: Ian Schiff

THE HELD NOTE

Amplified a cappella ensemble makes Arizona history and savors once-a-life moments together. | By Matthew Morris

Alaina Wegner '23 remembers the year of masked, parking-garage rehearsals, with the 16 singers in the Amplified a cappella ensemble spread far apart. She was a sophomore during the first full pandemic school year, and however strange they might've been, those socially distanced sessions represented a step up from the spring of 2020, when "everything," she recalls, "shut down" — an abrupt decrescendo, a sustained rest.

Indeed, if Wegner's time in Amplified underscored any truth, quiet or loud, it is that life is always changing, never static — but that there are things we can count on, too.

So it was that the closeknit, mixed-voice group's two semesters in a parking garage became 10 minutes on a Broadway stage — the final cherished moments of Wegner's collegiate a cappella career. She was a senior and Amplified's music director by then. And Amplified was performing work that she'd arranged, including a mashup of two songs: "Everything Has Grown" and "So Will I."

"The message that we created," Wegner says now, "was 'Everything has grown; everything has changed. Us seniors are moving on — other people are moving on — and in life things are changing. But we'll always be here for each other.'"

It's a fitting sentiment for the group. In 2023, Amplified grew and became the first group from the state of Arizona to advance to the finals of the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella, held in New York City. But really, the group just loves to sing together, accolades or no.

"I honestly just love Amplified's attitude toward everything," says junior Talia Tardogno, Wegner's successor as music director. "The fact that we're not stressed about winning competitions or beating people or putting people down — we just want to lift each other up."

Tardogno's grandfather, Frank Tardogno, sang with The Elegants, a barbershop quartet that recorded a gold record in the 1940s. "He always wanted me to be a singer," she says. "I started taking lessons at 9,



Alexa Kershner, Coleman Henry and Saige McMillan



Talia Tardogno

and I loved it." Sophomore Zach Leitzke, the group's social media chair, performed in musicals growing up and joked with his folks about attending fictitious Barton University, the school in "Pitch Perfect." Wegner, who discovered Amplified at the ASUA club fair in her first year, mostly sang in choirs as a kid. She has long thought of herself as a musician, but before college, she'd never arranged tunes — a creative process that, she found, goes far beyond notes on a page.

"A lot of what I did while directing was working on dynamics, working on phrasing and text emphasis and all the little things that go along with singing," Wegner says. "Putting notes on a page is just Step 1 of having a song, but everything else is what actually makes it music."

Then there's Caroline Blethen '23, the group's president last year. Blethen, a Washington state native, didn't join Amplified until her junior year, when pandemic guidelines began to loosen. She'd sung in a choir on campus, but it wasn't quite what she was looking for. She'd heard about a cappella, though, and found herself paired in a general chemistry lab with Wegner, who encouraged her to try out. Auditioning changed things.

"I had the most wonderful time," Blethen says. "I was so thankful, thinking, 'Where has this been all my college experience?' It was just what I needed."

Although the group has never prioritized medals and trophies, it is safe to say that its members won't forget the NYC trip. They slept on air mattresses in the basement of Tardogno's New Jersey childhood home. They competed against internet-famous groups that, Blethen says, "a lot of us have followed for a long time." Lots of family came, as did Amplified members past, who, Wegner says, "helped build that pathway."

Wegner says that she and her groupmates almost can't believe that the ICCA finals push truly happened, asking each other, "Did we actually do that?" She says it was like a "fever dream"; Blethen uses the word "surreal." "We never in a million years thought that we would be able to go to New York City," she says.

Amplified advanced to the final stages of the competition after winning the Southwest regionals, where another Wildcat group, Noteriety, also shone. And all told, the Wildcat a cappella community, which also includes the groups Enharmonics and Meow or Never, is more collegial than competitive. "So many people have made great friends not only within their group but in other groups as well, because we are all doing such similar things," Blethen says. "We like to make sure that we support each other, build each other up and celebrate each other's successes."

Today, Blethen's moved to Seattle for medical school. Wegner is in Tucson, working for the Tucson Girls Chorus and for Varsity Vocals, which puts on ICCAs; she's also arranging a song for Amplified. And for the ensemble, too, a new year has begun — new faces, new tunes. Everything has grown, as the song says, but Blethen speaks about what will never be erased: the bonds forged.

She points to a moment in the mashup they took to the Broadway stage: a mid-set sustain that felt like it might reverberate forever.

"We all are holding out a note for so long — and then, all of a sudden, it's really quiet. And lately, thinking about that moment, it's really resonated with me," Blethen says. "Just because there can be so much happening, so much going on, and then all of a sudden — poof. It's gone.

"But at the end of the day, we all did something together that we're so proud of, and I couldn't have had a better time with better people. And I'm just so thankful." ◆



Photo: Adobe Stock

STELLAR LAUNCH PAD

Rising Stars in Marketing offers students an edge.
By Tim Vanderpool

When you think of rising stars, you might conjure up Hollywood glitz, TV singing competitions or the latest celeb on the red carpet. But the University of Arizona's Eller College of Management boasts its own cadre of high achievers through the Rising Stars in Marketing program.

Established in 2022 with support from Robert Eckert '76 — former CEO of Kraft Foods and Mattel — the program recruits 30 top marketing majors each year. They get the opportunity to shadow executives, visit the marketing departments of leading corporations and develop their professional networks.

The goal is to create a pay-it-forward success loop, where elite marketing students — boosted by their real-world experiences — return after graduation to advise students coming up behind them. "If we can supercharge the experience students leave here with, they'll be more likely to come back and help create that experience for the next generation," says program director Jesper Nielsen. "We prepare them for internships, job opportunities and the opportunity for them to be mentors for future students."

Internships provide college students with job experience to better compete in a challenging job market. They are especially important in a complex industry that constantly tracks consumer behavior — and races to stay one step ahead of it. For a marketing major, job skills encompass everything from statistics and economics to direct customer sales. Graduates might land in fields as disparate as web content creation, social media, public relations, advertising or market research.

Alicia Murillo is the president of Rising Stars. As a marketing and business management double major, she relishes the complex, creative-analytical mix of marketing, which all comes down to bringing people together. "At the end of the day," she says, "marketing is about building relationships, whether it's in person or with the ad you're creating."

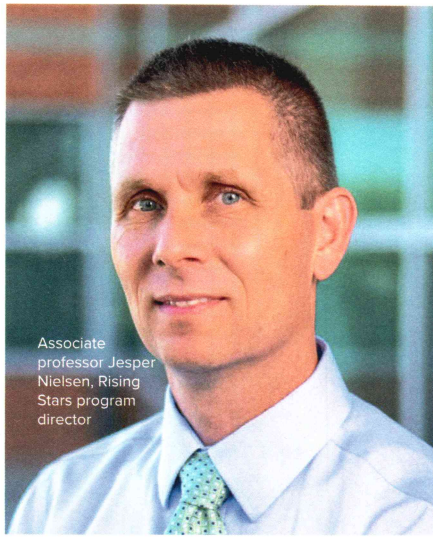
Through Rising Stars, Murillo was able to visit the Disney headquarters in California and the New York headquarters of yogurt-maker Chobani, where she engaged with professionals. "Both of those experiences just opened my eyes to the possibilities — within different types of companies and structures — of what marketing can offer," she says. Her goals when visiting the companies was to leave with these questions answered: How does the company operate? What are its goals and values? What are some of its employees' favorite and least favorite parts about working there? She stayed curious and engaged during visits to make the most of her experiences, she says, and gained valuable insights from them.

Murillo then took those experiences and shared them with her fellow classmates, such as junior Madison Reznicki, a combo marketing and dance major who also relishes the industry's left brain-right brain rigors. "I like that I can utilize my analytical side, especially for engagement content creation," she says, "and then try to make decisions for businesses based on how well campaigns have been doing."

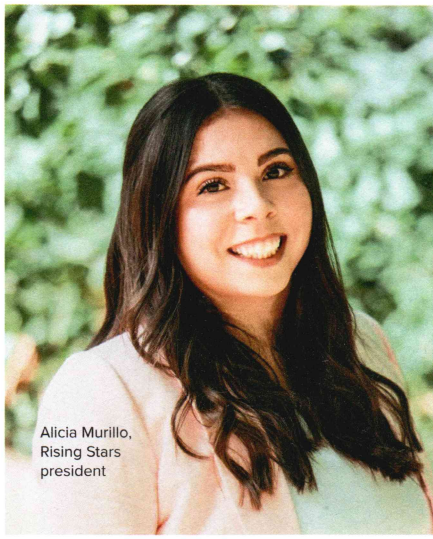
Reznicki recently shadowed an e-commerce product manager for Walmart in Sunnyvale, California. "Just seeing the whole process helped in my understanding of what product management is," she says. "I didn't realize how collaborative it is, because they're working with the design team, the business team and the legal team. There's so much that goes into it."

For Reznicki, the human-to-human relationships created through Rising Stars are essential. "The best part of the program," she says, "is just being around so many people who are also super passionate about marketing and building themselves professionally. There are 30 people. I know everyone's name, and I know I can rely on them for help with anything."

This culture of mutual assistance is what is certain to keep Rising Stars paying it forward for generations of students.



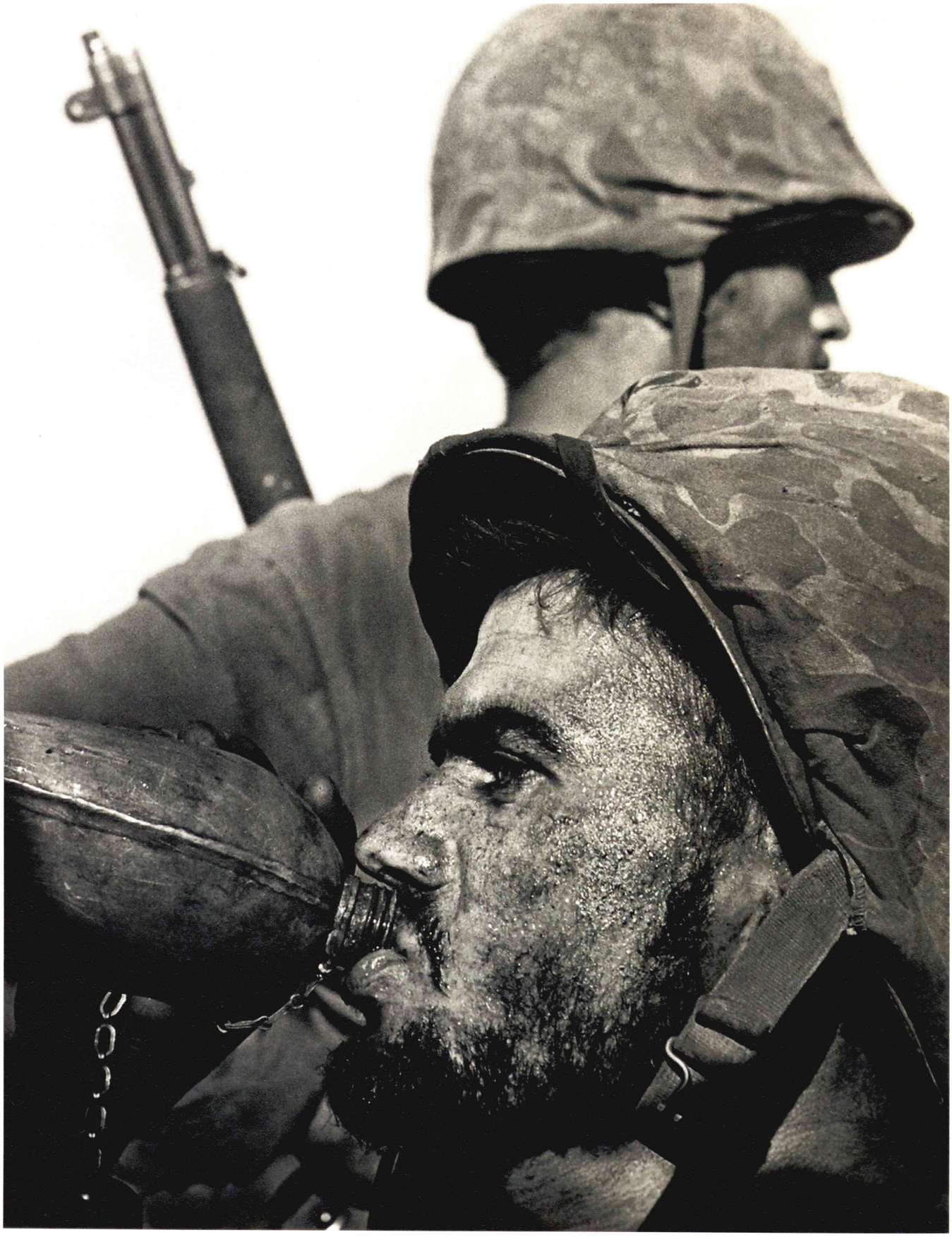
Associate professor Jesper Nielsen, Rising Stars program director



Alicia Murillo, Rising Stars president



Madison Reznicki, a member of the program



‘A Life in Pictures’ |

A CCP exhibit showcases the masterworks of W. Eugene Smith.
By Margaret Regan | Photos: Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona: W. Eugene Smith Archive. © The Heirs of W. Eugene Smith unless otherwise noted







Photographer W. Eugene Smith was only 25 when he was sent by Life Magazine to document the war raging between U.S. forces and Japan in the South Pacific. Arriving in 1943, he saw — and photographed — casualties so horrific that the government often censored their publication. Later, he remembered "a heart-rending set of pictures of some women and children caught between two fighting armies. I had just tried to save the life of a child (without luck)."

In despair, he wrote, "I have little hope that man has the intelligence to stop war."

Two years in, he was badly wounded by shrapnel and brought back to the United States. Smith would not pick up his camera for a year. When he finally did begin to work again, no doubt thinking of the child that died in his arms, he chose to make a picture of his own two children walking hand in hand in a sunlit forest, titled "The Walk to Paradise Garden."

Though known as a difficult man, he often saw his work as an effort to make the world a better place. Luckily for Tucson, 2,700 of his prints are in the archive at the University of Arizona's Center for Creative Photography. Forty-five of these masterworks are now in a show, "W. Eugene Smith: A Life in Pictures," that will run until March 2024. Rebecca Senf '94, lead curator, has chosen photos from five of his series around themes that connect the past with the present. As she says, it is "a group of distinct but relevant subjects — war, Black women's reproductive health, jazz, labor and industrial pollution."

The "Nurse Midwife" photo-essay, published in Life in December 1951, follows Maude Callen, a Black nurse midwife who worked day and night for desperately poor women in South Carolina. Smith's photos show Callen walking in the mud to see her patients. In one, she treats a Black woman behind a curtain in a makeshift clinic. In another, she is vaccinating a white baby. In those days of segregation, she served everybody in her community. Said Smith, "I wanted to make a very strong point about racism, by simply showing a remarkable woman doing a remarkable job in an impossible situation." Readers were so moved that many sent donations that enabled Callen to open a proper clinic.

In 1957, Smith's career took a turn when he abandoned his wife, Carmen Martinez, and their children and moved to a loft in Manhattan. Over the next eight

W. Eugene Smith, *Frontline Soldier with Canteen*, 1944, gelatin silver print, 34 x 26.3 cm

W. Eugene Smith, untitled, ca. 1957, gelatin silver print, 10.9 x 16.5 cm

W. Eugene Smith, *Aircraft Carrier and Destroyer of Naval Task Force 58, the South Pacific*, 1943, gelatin silver print, 26.5 x 34.3 cm

W. Eugene Smith, *The Walk to Paradise Garden*, 1946, gelatin silver print, 37.3 x 30.4 cm

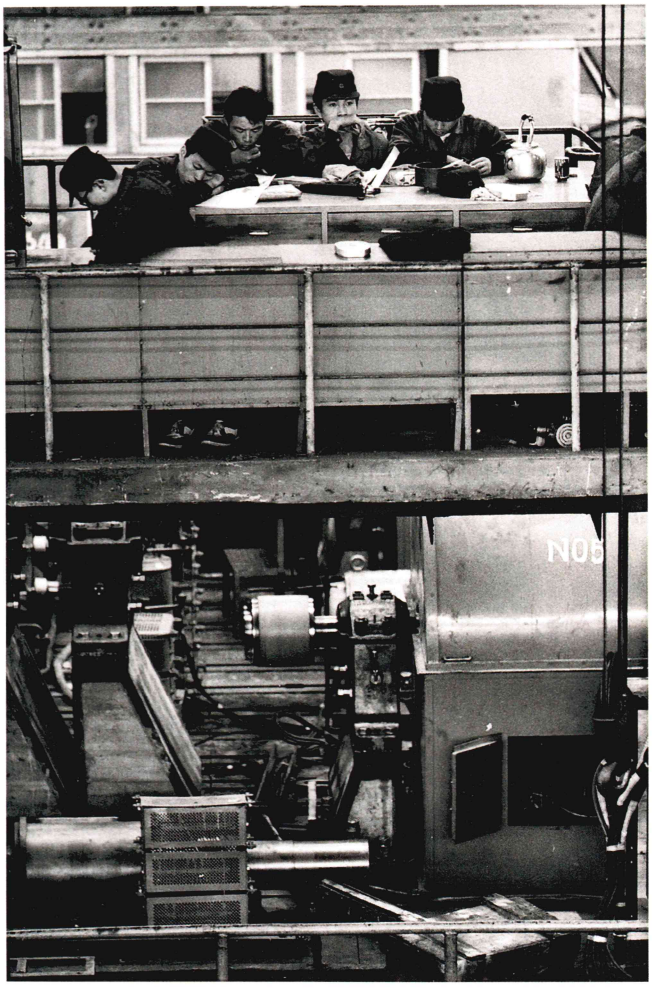
years, he explored another dimension of the Black experience in America: jazz. Late at night, musicians like Thelonious Monk and Charles Mingus would gather in his loft and play for hours. Smith recorded an extraordinary 4,000 hours on reel-to-reel tape and took some 40,000 photographs. Curators at the CCP made a playlist from this priceless legacy to play continuously for their visitors.

Another side of Smith's career was in postwar Japan. In 1963, the Hitachi corporation paid him to spend a year photographing their factories. Though hired by the corporation, Smith's eye was on the hardships of the workers. In one picture, a weary group is eating lunch in a room above massive machines on the factory floor.

Smith returned to Japan in 1970 with Aileen Sprague, a native speaker of Japanese whom he would later marry. Together, their mission for three years was to document mercury poisoning in a fishery in the town of Minamata. The Chisso Corporation had spewed chemicals into the water, causing birth defects and neurological disorders among people who ate the fish. The project produced one of his most famous pictures, an image of a mother and her disfigured daughter titled "Tomoko and Mother in the Bath." The series was published in Life as "Death Flows from a Pipe" and then made into a book, with Sprague as co-author. The photographs sparked international outrage and became an early call for environmental activism.

Smith and Sprague eventually parted ways, and he moved back to New York City in 1974. But he was in poor health, made worse by alcohol and amphetamine abuse. In 1975 — when the CCP had just been founded by John Schaefer and Ansel Adams — John Morris, a journalist friend of Smith's, persuaded Schaefer and Adams to invite Smith to bring his archive to Tucson. They also offered a teaching appointment. Smith agreed, arriving in Tucson in 1977 with an extraordinary 44,000 pounds of freight: photographs, cameras and a lifetime of personal papers.

But his time in Tucson was short. After a disabling stroke in December 1977, a second stroke in October of the following year killed him at the age of 59. His life's work still inspires. ◆







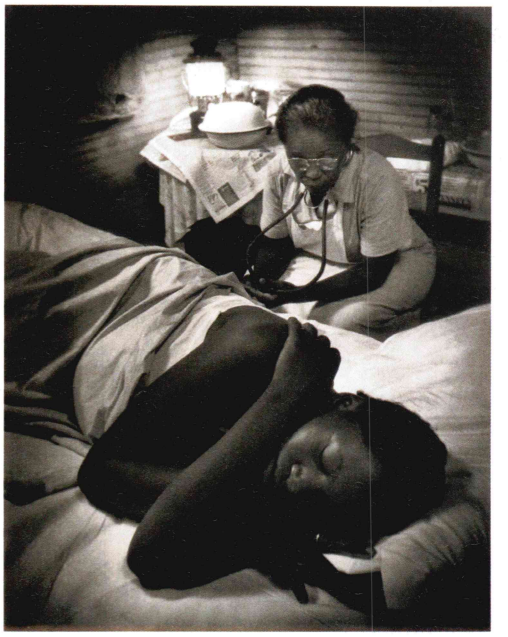
W. Eugene Smith, untitled, ca. 1961, gelatin silver print, 38.9 x 26.2 cm

W. Eugene Smith, *Fishing in Minamata Bay*, ca. 1972, gelatin silver print, 22.2 x 33.1 cm. © Aileen Mioko Smith

W. Eugene Smith, untitled, 1960s, gelatin silver print, 20.8 x 31.2 cm







W. Eugene Smith, untitled, 1960s, gelatin silver print, 19.2 x 29.7 cm

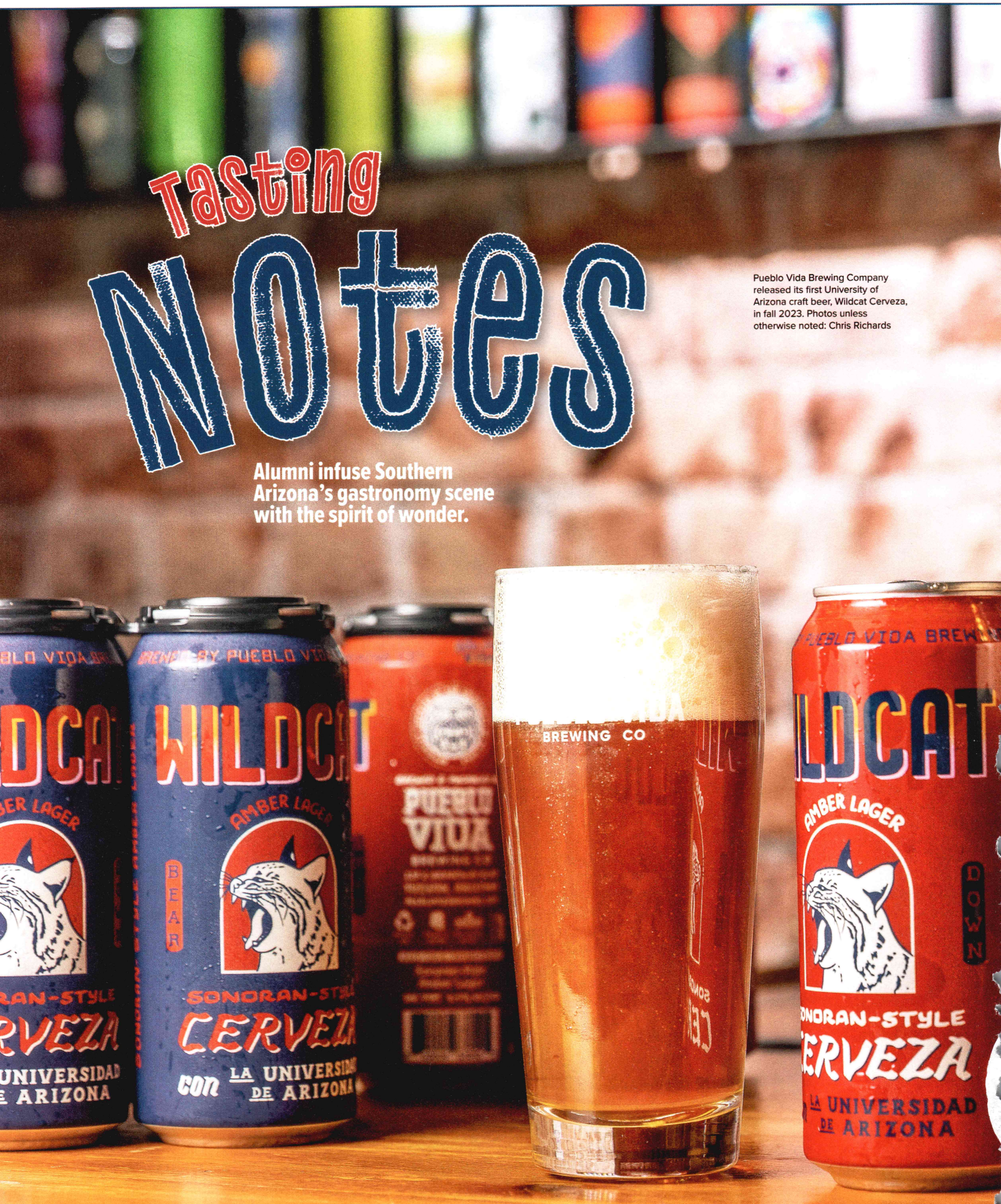
W. Eugene Smith, *Steelworker with Goggles*, 1955, gelatin silver print, 27.8 x 23.6 cm

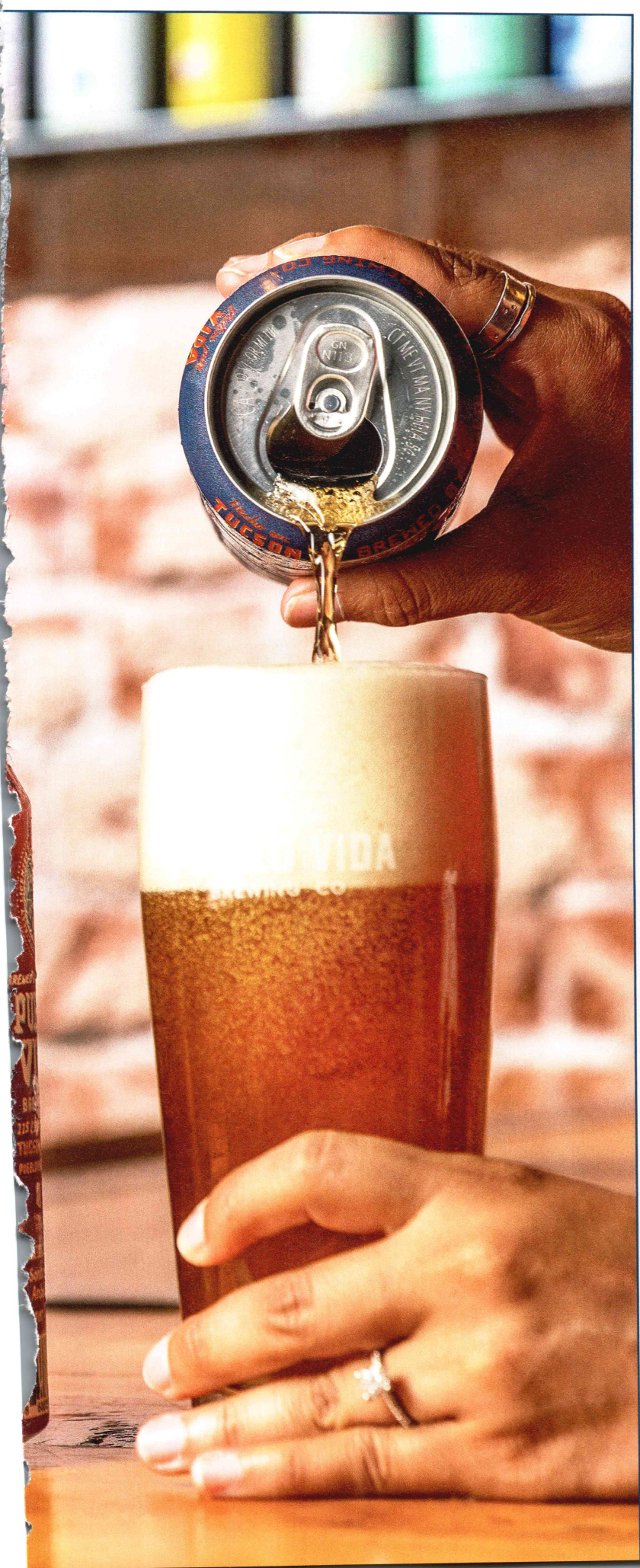
W. Eugene Smith, *Maude Awaiting Delivery*, 1951, gelatin silver print, 32.5 x 25.3 cm

Tasting Notes

Alumni infuse Southern Arizona's gastronomy scene with the spirit of wonder.

Pueblo Vida Brewing Company released its first University of Arizona craft beer, Wildcat Cerveza, in fall 2023. Photos unless otherwise noted: Chris Richards





Don Guerra '01 says his breadmaking dreams began in his garage, where he baked almost half a million loaves in eight years, approaching his craft with the disciplined faith of a "bread monk." The Barrio Bread founder used his long period of study, in part, to refine his "palette of paints" — his grains.

Guerra is part of the heritage-grain movement, baking almost exclusively with Arizona-grown wheat varietals. And in Tucson, a UNESCO City of Gastronomy home to a striking array of cuisines, he's not alone in his attention to origin — not even among Wildcats.

Anna Perreira '04 opened Yellow Brick Coffee with her brother, David Perreira '06, after studying the history of the beverage and traveling to Ethiopia, a coffee-growing mecca. East Asian studies alum Andrew McNeill '13, meanwhile, moved here to join Seven Cups Fine Chinese Teas, a company that forges sturdy bonds with Chinese teamakers. He's never looked back.

Former Wildcats Athene Kline and Adam Krantz of Monsoon Chocolate also pay homage to place, dreaming up treats like the prickly pear caramel, a bon bon shaped like the purple mountains surrounding the city.

In the following pages, we report on each of these alums, whose academic backgrounds vary widely. We also check in with Pueblo Vida Brewing Company's married team, Eller grads Linette Antillon '09 and Kyle Jefferson '09. Pueblo Vida's history of concocting distinctive beers to benefit Southern Arizona organizations like Many Mouths One Stomach led the university to select the brewery last fall as its first craft-alcohol licensee.

And we share the story of the mother-daughter duo behind The Meading Room, a farm winery located an hour south of the city in the golden hills of Sonoita. Barbara Christianson and Kylie Daniels '19 source the honey for their mead from local apiaries. Someday, they hope to pass their land down to Daniels' daughter.

Each notable, these businesses represent just a handful of the alumni-operated outfits making a mark on Southern Arizona's rich food and beverage scene — one that's left an indelible impression on almost everyone who's called this university, city or region home.

every beer has a story

The collaborative spirit of an Eller alum-run brewery leads to UArizona's first craft-beer license.

Outside the nondescript building, Broadway Boulevard bustles with the energy of downtown Tucson. Inside, the taproom is filled with chatter and people enjoying pints of beer at a long wooden table. In the back, steel brewing tanks click and hum. Hundreds of cans, each featuring a unique design, line the original brick masonry of the walls, a visual record of nearly a decade of Pueblo Vida Brewing Company's beers.

Founded in 2014 by husband and wife co-owners Kyle Jefferson '09 and Linette Antillon '09, Pueblo Vida has been a downtown fixture ever since.

Antillon and Jefferson met while attending the Eller College of Management.

"Tucson meant so much to us, and we're a part of the community — that's why we chose to stay here and do this," Jefferson says. "It's home."

"Tucson is close-knit," Antillon adds. "We're friends with restaurant owners and other breweries in town, and that's a Tucson thing. It feels like a small town."

Jefferson calls the craft brewing community more collaborative than competitive. "What big breweries spill in an hour, that's what we make in a year. We're all so small we can never compete, so we might as well work together," he says.

Jefferson always wanted to run his own business. And with Antillon's marketing degree, the two sought to create "a fun brand and community space," he says.

Pueblo Vida's diverse, ever-changing menu sets the brewery apart from many others. While the business has a few flagship beers produced year-round, most are rotating, seasonal brews.

Jefferson describes his preferences as seasonal. "I love light lagers in summer and stouts in winter. That's the beauty of craft beer — you're not stuck having one style," he says.

Antillon says what she drinks depends on her mood and what she's doing. "I think that's why we got into it," adds Jefferson. "For the different occasions beers can go with."

"Most places start with five flagship beers, and the cans are all designed with the same look and feel," Jefferson says. "We've done over 230 cans with different designs. Each one has a story. Each one's unique."

The couple works with designer Ryan Trayte '05 to create the original can designs.

Jefferson points to a can of Embers, whose design mimics a Pendleton blanket pattern. "We love getting outdoors and having a beer around the campfire," he says. "We want this beer to evoke that."

Of the beers they've worked on, Logistics stands as a favorite. "It's fresh-hopped here, so we only do it once a year," Antillon says. "They harvest the hops, and within 24 hours we have it here to put it into the beer."

The hops are grown in the Pacific Northwest and flown to Phoenix, where Jefferson picks them up. "They're in the beer by the afternoon," he says.

"It's called Logistics because there's a lot of moving parts, but it's super meaningful."

In fall 2023, Pueblo Vida released its first University of Arizona craft beer, Wildcat Cerveza. The brewery was chosen as the university's craft alcohol licensee due to its quality products and history of thoughtful collaboration.

"It was a real 'pinch me' moment," Jefferson says. "As alumni, for them to pick us, it gave me goosebumps. We're very lucky."



Linette Antillon '09 and Kyle Jefferson '09





Customers pose with Wildcat Cerveza merchandise at Pueblo Vida's release party for the beer.

Antillon and Jefferson are well versed in collaborating with local organizations to create unique beers. Many Mouths One Stomach, the nonprofit behind the All Souls Procession in Tucson, is among Pueblo Vida's yearly partnerships. The brewery also partners with The Spirit World 100, a gravel-road bike race to benefit Arizona trails.

"We do a beer for them, and part of the profits go to Arizona trails to keep that land clean," she says. "That arm of our business has grown, and it's fun to partner on things like that."

Antillon says helping others and forming partnerships are part of who they are.

Pueblo Vida hosts myriad events to bring people into the space and create lasting memories. In summer, for example, the brewery hosts monthly bike rides in partnership with local bike shops and Living Streets Alliance.

"Things like that are what makes it such a community and much more than, like, 'we just make beer,'" Antillon says.

Antillon and Jefferson agree that being part of exciting moments in customers' lives is one of the most rewarding aspects of their jobs.

"We've had so many people come in and say, 'We had your beer at our wedding,'" Antillon says. "Building memories for customers — I like hearing those stories and seeing people experience joy because of what we've created."

—By Kim Stoll



Kylie Daniels '19 started The Meading Room with her mother, Barbara Christianson.

farm to tap

Three generations blend foraged ingredients with honey, crafting eclectic mead drinks.

It's always been about the land.

A cool October wind comes over the rolling hills of Sonoita's desert landscape as rain clouds swell on the horizon. Dressed for a day's work, Kylie Daniels '19 looks west toward Tucson, with a distant memory calling her back.

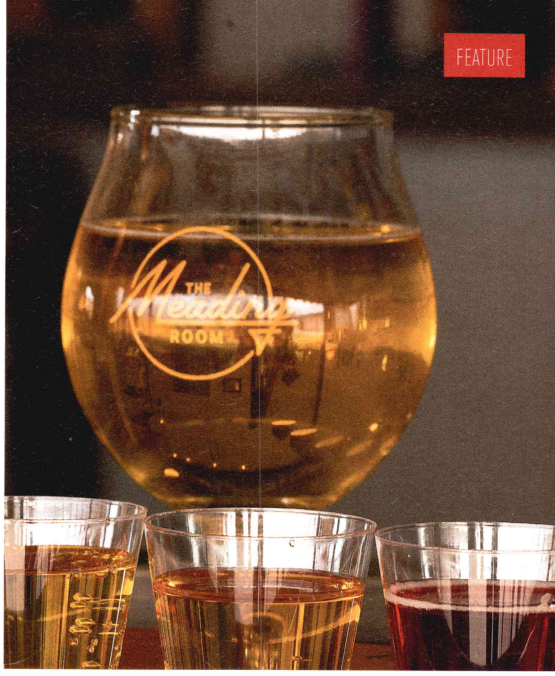
"I used to ride the land behind our property," she says, remembering riding horses and her small-town childhood, attending grade school with only eight other children in her class. Now the home where she chooses to raise her daughter is in the heart of Arizona's wine country.

Daniels didn't set out with a vision to create The Meading Room, the farm winery she owns with her mother, Barbara Christianson. Their space is bounded by a stage for live music and fields where baby trees they've planted are yet to yield fruit. Future brews await.

"My mom and I are very independent women who like to figure stuff out," she says. "We bought this land with the intention of



The farm winery is located in the rolling hills of Sonoita, Arizona. Photo: Josh Wallace



farming it, and it was about owning land for my mom, for me and for my daughter. I didn't have expectations. I just knew we would have this land forever."

From that intention has grown a farm-to-tap business making specialty mead with raw honey sourced from small, organic apiaries.

"We always use fresh ingredients and process everything here. We want to share cool flavors that reflect where we're living," she says as she shows our visiting group The Meading Room's on-site winery. The space features large fermenting tanks and shelves of honey, and her crew is getting ready to batch test pumpkin cider from a recent harvest. After years of trial and error, they can now distribute their products as a domestic farm winery producer, retailer and distributor.

"If we don't grow it, then we try to source it locally," Daniels says. "We're just kind of down to ferment whatever we can get our hands on."

Daniels has learned to forage and returns to the land for inspiration and creativity. The results are drink combinations such as a mead made of desert wildflower honey, lavender and pear or a cider made of apples, chiltepin pepper and mango. Other local ingredients that appear on the drink menu include chili, prickly pear, juniper berries and sunflower petals.

In early days, Daniels was still commuting to the University of Arizona as a full-time student in photography and taking care of a young child. The family lived in a trailer as the vision for the business slowly came to life. She and her mom had tossed around the idea of having a farmers market, and while their small-business ideas changed directions often, her mom also made wine and mead at home.

"My mom and I were both really into fermentation, so it just kind of grew out of that idea," Daniels says. "And then, next thing I know, we're putting in this massive production facility and people were showing up."

They also liked the idea of using something other than grapes. "And with me being able to buy honey from small apiaries, it's a good way to support an industry that really needs it," Daniels says.

Daniels says mead is versatile and gives her a lot of room to be "super creative." And while people may assume that mead is always sweet, because it's made from honey, the sugars in the honey turn into alcohol during fermentation, just like the sugars in grapes for wine.

"You can make it dry, or if you want to do a sweeter variety, you can add fruit. Or you can add hops, you could add grapes, you can do just about anything. And it's just probably, like, one of the more creative alcohol options out there," Daniels says.

She is part of the maker process from beginning to end, and she's always been, as she says, "into process." "Even when I was studying photography, I did a lot of analog stuff. And I was always doing alternative processes and darkroom things. I just like getting my hands in there."

Daniels greets her customers with a gracious smile and a sparkle in her eyes. Above the bar are some of her photographs: moody black and white imagery of horses grazing, graceful willows and vistas where, she says, monsoon storms light up the sky in the summertime. "It's a shame that no one visits Arizona in the summer, because it's the most beautiful time of year here," she says.

Another photo depicts a young girl peeking around the corner of a black door with the same curiosity Daniels displays. It's Daniels' daughter, Zannah, and the image captures the sense of family and joy infused in The Meading Room's intergenerational creation.

—By Sarah Beaudry



Don Guerra '01, founder of Barrio B

community-supported baker

A former teacher turned bread maker makes education the foundation of his business.

When asked what their favorite wheat varietal is, most people would struggle to respond. But Don Guerra '01 knows his answer in an instant: einkorn.

"It's the mother of all wheats," he explains. "All the wheats in the world have been bred off this variety."

Guerra — a Tucson heritage-grain baker, business owner and educator — speaks with enthusiasm as he adds Sonoran white wheat to his list of favorites.

"It was the first wheat of the Americas, so they say this is the mother of American wheats," he says. "This is the wheat that Father Kino brought in the late 1690s, so it has a really great story in connection to our region."

From a young age, Guerra enjoyed making bread with his mother and eating his nana's tortillas. His father owned a barbershop and instilled in young Guerra an entrepreneurial drive, encouraging him to start a shoeshine business at age eight and to invest wisely.

Today, those lessons and Guerra's years of practice have helped Barrio Bread become a local sensation with a national reputation. In 2022, Guerra won the prestigious James Beard Award for Outstanding Baker.

"I feel like the bread chooses the person," he says. "You need to be patient, mindful. You need to have endurance. But you also need to be nurturing with the bread, because bread is a living food."

Making bread, he says, is an alchemy — once leavened, the ingredients come to life and the bread grows. The baker's job is to manage that growth. Guerra describes breadmaking as both art and science and working with wheats as being "a painter with a palette of paints," the breads your "canvas."

Guerra operated a bakery out of his garage for eight years before opening Barrio Bread in Broadway Village in 2016. During those years in the garage, thanks to a grant from the USDA in partnership with local





Guerra bakes with almost exclusively Arizona-grown wheat varietals. In 2022, he won the James Beard Award for Outstanding Baker.

nonprofit Native Seeds/SEARCH, Guerra entered the heritage-grain movement.

Using only grains grown in Arizona was an educational process for Guerra, as he learned the nuances of wheat varietals and how best to blend them.

"I was like a bread monk," he says. "Working by myself, I made 430,000 breads out of that garage — but it helped me understand where I wanted to go. I knew that I wanted to build a bakery that would be all about local grains."

Tucson proved the perfect location for that endeavor, says Guerra, as farmers, distributors and business collaborators reached out in support.

"There's just more uniqueness when you share your talents with others and make something beautiful together," he says. "We are in a UNESCO-designated City of Gastronomy — we have an obligation to share best practices not only with our own culinary artists but with the world."

To this end, Guerra shares his business with "open hands."

Barrio Bread is not just a bakery to him. A key pillar of the company is education and outreach. Guerra graduated from the University of Arizona College of Education in 2001 and taught at an elementary school before opening his bakery. He says his degree has been foundational to Barrio Bread.

"As a younger baker, I didn't have the skills to lead a bakery," he says. "I was missing how to transfer information. Studying metacognition, pedagogy and how to design a lesson was everything to me."

While holding workshops locally, Guerra also has traveled the world teaching about the development of local grain economies and his breadmaking methods.

"My biggest joy is serving the community and teaching this craft, so it lives on forever," he says. "I hope this is my legacy."

Guerra emphasizes that it takes everyone in the community to make his bakery work.

"From the seed scientists, the farmers, millers, brewers, distillers, food makers and then the end consumer, we operate together," he says. "We need to pay respects to everyone along the grain chain; it starts with the farmers, and it starts with the Indigenous people of this region, who have been farming in this community for centuries."

As Guerra sets his sights on his next project — opening a bakery in Gilbert in collaboration with Hayden Flour Mills — he is excited to put the apron back on and get creative.

"This is the life that I've always dreamed of," he says. "I love feeding people; I love seeing people smile when they have this bag of bread in front of them. And I love knowing it will nurture them. It makes me proud that I can get up every day and make people happy with what I've dedicated my life to."

—By Kim Stoll

the beans speak

A cocoa profiler and a chocolatier make a formidable team.

Cocoa nib horchata and Sonoran sea salt dark chocolate, both boasting regional Southwestern flavors, are just two of the bon bons in Monsoon Chocolate's Catalina collection, named for Tucson's northeast mountain range.

Another, the prickly pear caramel, looking itself like a purple mountain with concentric ridges and white swirls, bursts open in the mouth with a surprise fruity undertone in subtle contrast to the rich bitterness of cocoa. It's a delicate composition one might call a work of art.

"We create these little magic moments that taste good — flavors and textures for people to enjoy," says Adam Krantz, founder and CEO of Monsoon Chocolate, a popular Tucson chocolate factory.

And then there's the name — Monsoon, a thunderous desert storm most Tucsonans relish — that Krantz came to after brainstorming everything he loves about Tucson.

"It seemed like a poetic representation of the flavor experience of eating really good chocolate: It's this thing that just kind of takes over — you have a moment to pause and recognize the power of it, and then it disappears," he says.

Athene Kline, co-owner of and chocolatier at Monsoon Chocolate, likens indulging in their bon bons to the respite a monsoon offers from the oppressive summer heat, providing a break from the stresses of daily life.

Kline and Krantz have been working together since the shop opened in 2018. Both giggle at the memory of their opening day. "It was bonkers," Kline says — taking orders, talking to customers, doing a lot of food runs.

Krantz attended the University of Arizona as a theater and music theory major from 1999-2002, in what he calls a profound experience, "a catalyst for all of the changes that were going to come in my life." He was young and certain of his path but ended up leaving the university early after finding that he was at odds with the theater department. "It really pushed me in a totally different direction, which is a big part of where I am now," he says.

He began working in the Tucson food industry and then continued in Portland, forming connections and networks in the specialty chocolate industry. After a few startup fails, Krantz says he just fell into the chocolate industry. "This thing happens where every time an entrepreneur fails, you get motivated to try again," he says. "I've pursued many projects. A lot of them you could call failures, but I've learned along the way."

With experience behind him, Krantz saw an opportunity to help create a different model for a chocolate company. "It's called the 'bean-to-bar chocolate' or 'craft chocolate' movement," he says. And to him, Tucson was the perfect place to begin his venture. "I felt like, if I don't start this company in Tucson, eventually somebody else will."

Enter Kline. Like Krantz, her journey into chocolate began with an educational detour. Initially a pre-med microbiology major, she left the university to follow her passion for creative arts. After dabbling in photography, she became a pastry chef in Tucson. Meanwhile, her husband introduced her to his good friend, Krantz, setting the stage for a well-balanced partnership. Soon, she became smitten with chocolate. "The more I learned about chocolate, the more curious and in love I became," she says.

Kline, who makes the confections and bon bons, enjoys finding interesting taste combinations by mixing regional



Athene Kline and Adam Krantz



Krantz saw the opportunity to bring the "bean-to-bar" craft chocolate movement to Tucson.

flavors with cacao — flavors like prickly pear, horchata, blue corn or hibiscus. She complements Krantz, who comes up with the profile of the cacao beans they source, determined by their chemical makeup. The partners also bring distinct points of view influenced by their diverse food heritage. "I grew up in Southern Germany, and I'm half Korean," Kline says, "and Adam grew up in Marietta, Georgia, and is Jewish. So, there are some crossover flavors in foods. But there's also a lot of differences," she says.

Together, they listen to the beans. "They speak to us," Krantz says. "Every single bean we source is just wildly different. It gets into genetics and the microclimate they come from." One of their biggest challenges is the cost of making ethically sourced chocolate, a top priority. They understand their chocolate isn't accessible to everyone but say if you are paying just a couple dollars for a chocolate bar then someone is being taken advantage of in the supply chain. "I would go as far as to say that any chocolate bar that costs less than $4 on the shelf falls into that category," Krantz says.

Keeping costs down to serve the community is their focus for the future — and factory tours, taste testing and chocolate-making classes are coming soon.

—By Sarah Beaudry

the yellow brick road

Sibling trust sustains a local coffeeshop.

When they were small, Anna '04 and David Perreira '06 weren't just sister and brother. They were best friends, trusting one another more than they trusted anyone else in upstate New York, where they were born, or Tucson, where they moved when David was 8 and Anna was 12. More than anyone in the world, really, says Anna — so perhaps it's no surprise that after life pushed them apart, it brought them together again.

It was coffee that reunited the siblings, though it took some time.

About 15 years ago, Anna found herself in New York City, where she worked as a financial analyst after earning a University of Arizona bachelor's degree in math. Back then, she drank coffee like so many 9-to-5ers do: for the caffeine and sugar rush. To get through the day.

After completing his own UArizona degree, in Spanish linguistics, David also had left the Southwest, moving overseas. A backpacking enthusiast, he dreamed of someday opening a hostel in Nicaragua. He didn't have a passion for coffee yet, either.

But one day in the Big Apple, a friend invited Anna to a guided coffee-tasting. She learned to discern the subtleties of flavors and met Peter Giuliano — a big name in the Third Wave coffee movement, which calls for coffee that is "traceable back to the farm and roasted to highlight its flavor," says David.

She was hooked — and not on caffeine.

"It blew my mind that I could taste notes of orange or blueberries," Anna says. "I started to read about coffee sourcing. I would talk about it all the time and even spent my lunch hour at a local coffee training facility each week."

Goodbye to finance. Goodbye to New York.

Hello — click of the heels — to home.

Anna founded the specialty roastery Yellow Brick Coffee in 2011. She had almost everything she needed: Knowledge, gleaned through courses on coffee history and roasting techniques. A space to start up in her parents' Green Valley garage. Motivation to share not only superb, single-origin coffee but also the story behind it. A 5-pound roasting machine.

But she didn't have a copilot. She turned to her brother, by then a hospitality grad student in Flagstaff.

"His work ethic was obvious, and we shared the same values of supporting diversity and community," she says. "Considering a partnership with him was a no-brainer."

She began mailing him coffee samples, and he formed his own interest in the drink. Soon, David was on board.

"Our skill sets are very complementary," Anna says. Plus, "He was willing to help in exchange for a free spare bedroom in my crappy little apartment."

The siblings traveled through Central America, forging relationships with coffee farmers in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras. In 2013, Yellow Brick Coffee opened as a roastery-cafe on Tucson's South Dodge Boulevard.

Like Anna, David is aware of how special it is to work alongside family.

"It's difficult, but there's no one you trust more, who you know is going to put in the extra time," he says. "If something goes wrong at 2 in the morning, we will troubleshoot together. You're not alone."

The roastery remains on South Dodge. But last March, the Perreiras moved their cafe to Country Club Road.

One day last fall, David sat outside the cafe, speaking about his and Anna's journeys as the owners of a small business. About what it means to be local. To *not* be Starbucks.

A man from Tirrito Farms in Willcox walked by, and David gestured toward him.

"We choose to carry their milk," he said. "We don't have to. We can get milk from Shamrock. It would be easier and maybe a little cheaper. But Tirrito's milk is phenomenal."

It's a feeling echoed by Anna: Place matters. Community does. Identity, too.

"Starting Yellow Brick Coffee was a passion project," she says. "I wanted to share what I was learning with the world. What I really wanted



David Perreira '06, co-owner of Yellow Brick Coffee, and staff member Lea Burkholder



to share was an entire experience — not just the flavors but also the depth of culture tied to individual coffee-growing regions."

The siblings no longer source all their coffee directly. Each is married, and travel costs more cups of coffee than one can count. Anna works full time elsewhere.

But they still believe in traceability — in telling the story behind a cup through tasting notes and details like elevation, processing method, and farm or cooperative of origin; in recognizing the farmers whose work permits us to drink coffee in the first place.

Coffee like Kenya: Ichamama, a highlight on the shelves grown by small-lot farmers at the Ichamama Washing Station, part of the Othaya Cooperative in Nyeri, Kenya.

"This coffee is very clean and has the perfect body, with a juicy acidity and the notes of black currant that we love to highlight in quality Kenyas," David says. "In 2017, we had the opportunity to visit the cooperative and saw firsthand their focus on quality and consistency, which helps their coffee shine in the cup year over year."

Shine, perhaps, like a road of yellow bricks. Like a sister and her brother, back home.

—By Matthew Morris



Andrew McNeill '13 of Seven Cups Fine Chinese Teas

tea geek

An East Asian studies grad follows his passions for Chinese language and tea.

At a varnished wooden table tucked inside the front door of Seven Cups Fine Chinese Teas, Andrew McNeill '13 prepares a rose herbal, with assorted tea gadgetry — a clay pot, a white lidded bowl — spread before him. The rose herbal is said to cool the body, a welcome effect on this hot September day in Tucson, as the midafternoon sun streams in from East Fort Lowell Road. Nearby, a clownfish flaps its fins in a tank; in the back room, folks chat and sip beneath a high, wood-beamed ceiling.

Every now and then, McNeill pauses what he's saying to pour a splash each into porcelain teacups small as shot glasses. He's readied the tea in the white lidded bowl, or *gaiwan*. "You get a little slice of flavor" with each new pour, he says, sort of like tasting whiskey.

Seven Cups, McNeill says, was the dream of Austin Hodge, a former software engineer, and Hodge's wife, Zhuping, once a teahouse manager in Guangzhou, a city in southern China. The business began in 2002, when the not-yet-wed Hodges chose to source teas directly from China — the world's top producer and exporter of tea, McNeill says — and present them to an American market.

Austin Hodge's family resided in Tucson, so they chose to open the shop here.

"You have very dense and very long histories of tea production that exist throughout [China]," says McNeill, who today is Seven Cups' director of business development. "And, historically, China being a very fragmented place linguistically, culturally even, there hasn't been a whole lot of unity in these teas being available in one place."

He joined the business in 2007, relocating from central Florida, where he was raised. The Hodges asked that he work in the warehouse and teahouse and that he also keep the books, a jack-of-all-trades role. Then employed by a teashop in Orlando — and a non-degree-

seeking student of Chinese language — McNeill says that he moved across the country for a minimum-wage job because no one anywhere was doing what the Hodges, "tea geeks" like him, were.

The tea industry, he says, prized homogeneity and obscured sources to safeguard business interests. But the Hodges weren't like that. They labeled teas with their year of harvest and chief teamaker, rather than describing them vaguely as being "from China."

For McNeill, the most important aspect of the Seven Cups enterprise is the building of solid, respectful relationships with Chinese teamakers creating specialty teas across the country — and shepherding that tea to American customers. "Connecting those two ends of the supply chain," he says, "has been the core of what Seven Cups is."

Respecting Chinese ways of being and knowing, never veering into the "colonial mindset" that he has at times observed among westerners, is of central importance to McNeill. "Knowledge is flowing from here to us," he says, meaning from the teamakers to him and the Hodges. "We have to understand that that's the direction that it's coming." To ignore or discount the context in which Chinese tea is produced is poor form, he suggests, for both business and the spirit.

The Hodges and McNeill have embraced this attitude of listening and learning in their time running the teahouse — and not only during their sourcing trips to teamaking centers of China like Wuyishan City, a southeastern city famous for oolong where rock formations, McNeill says, almost "hang in the clouds." Small businesses must listen and learn, he says, noting that the Hodges have relied on past Eller MBA candidates like Mikel Chertudi, today a lecturer at the college, to evaluate the business's operations.

While working at Seven Cups, McNeill also went back to school, enrolling in 2009 at the University of Arizona, where he declared a major in agricultural economics. He also continued his Chinese-language studies and, at the end of his first year, was encouraged by his professors to apply for a yearlong scholarship program in Taiwan.

"Being accepted to that program really changed my life," he says. He'd seen new ways of living and learning and couldn't return to the old. "I wanted to continue to study Chinese," he says. "Especially with the relationships I had with the department, it just seemed too good to leave that opportunity." McNeill earned his degree in East Asian studies, taking courses in Chinese language; in literature, film and translation; and in anthropology. He also minored in business.

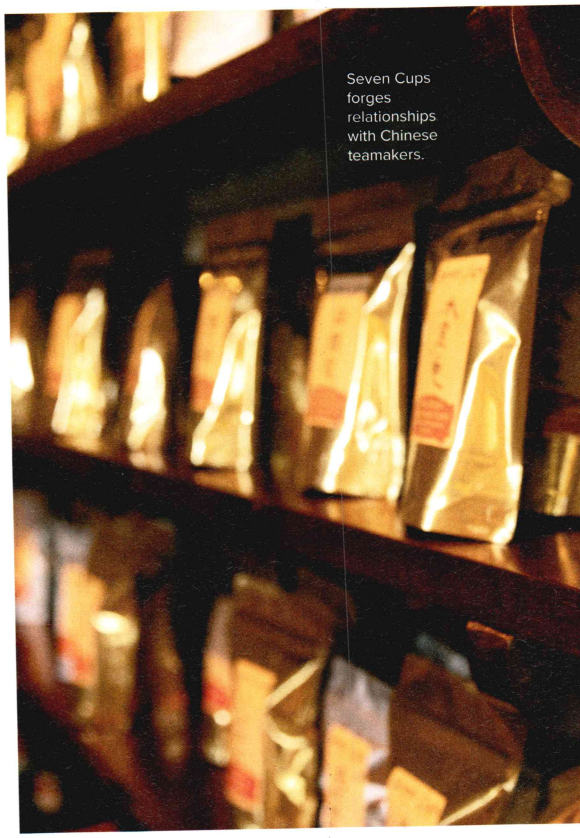
McNeill started reading about Chinese tea when he was 20 or so years old and just trying to find his way forward. Back then, he couldn't read Chinese-language books on the subject, and only a few were available in English. He didn't know, of course, that he'd end up across the country, closely studying Chinese language and making a career in Chinese tea. "You get interested in something, and it leads to 10 other things," he observes.

A cup of tea becomes seven, and before you know it, you have a life. ◆

—By Matthew Morris



McNeill began working at Seven Cups in 2007.



Seven Cups forges relationships with Chinese teamakers.





Photo: Adobe Stock

SOLUTIONS FOR A CHANGING CLIMATE

Experts suggest solutions to encourage food, water and economic security in a changing climate. | By Mikayla Mace Kelley

Most of the world's food is grown in semi-arid environments, like Arizona. But growing food reliably in such places will become more challenging as temperatures rise and water supplies dwindle, experts say. This eventuality threatens not only the state's agricultural sector — a major player in American food production — but also the rural communities at the heart of agricultural production.

In December 2022, University of Arizona President Robert C. Robbins convened the Presidential Advisory Commission on the Future of Agriculture and Food Production in a Drying Climate and tasked it with proposing solutions to this problem.

After six months of consulting and surveying experts and stakeholders, the commission released a report identifying threats to Arizona agriculture as well as potential solutions.



It recommends five actions that UArizona can take:

- Creating an Institute for Sustainable Food, Water and Agriculture Systems to bring together experts from across disciplines to develop broad solutions.
- Creating a Center for Soil Health to bring food producers and researchers together to maintain and restore soils.
- Creating technology and innovation hubs at the Maricopa, Yuma and Campus Agricultural centers, as well as at Biosphere 2, to shrink the gap between idea generation and implementation. These hubs will not only develop and test new technologies but also educate students.
- Expanding partnerships with the tribal agriculture community to learn from historical agricultural knowledge and exchange ideas.
- Establishing new and strengthening existing collaborations with institutions in arid regions around the world to learn from and share with partners facing similar climate pressures.

Read more about the report at research.arizona.edu/impact/future-of-food.



Professor Sharon B. Megdal, a water policy expert, speaks with UArizona President Robert C. Robbins.
Photo: University of Arizona

Water expert Sharon B. Megdal shares her perspective on water in a drying climate.

Sharon B. Megdal is the director of the University of Arizona Water Resources Research Center (WRRC), a Cooperative Extension center and a research unit in the College of Agriculture, Life and Environmental Sciences. She is a specialist in the department of environmental science, the C.W. and Modene Neely Endowed Professor, and a Distinguished Outreach Professor. In May, she was appointed to Gov. Katie Hobbs' Water Policy Council.

Megdal on Indigenous Communities, Water and Values

Arizona is such a fascinating state, in terms of its geography, its distribution of water and the kinds of communities that we have. We have many rural communities, and we are home to 22 federally recognized Native Nations — and each is different. When it comes to Indigenous communities, I had to learn from almost zero knowledge. I grew up in New Jersey, and going through school, there was never any mention of Native Nations and Indigenous communities. And Native Nations in Arizona are so important to everything in the state, but especially water.

At the Water Center, we help educate people who have a thirst for knowledge and want to learn about Indigenous communities, Indigenous water and Indigenous values, much as I have learned about it. We hosted a conference in 2021 and have integrated it into our programming, including webinars and conferences that I moderate with all Indigenous speakers.

In March, I was at the United Nations water conference where — through our university accreditation and a letter signed by President Robert C. Robbins that committed us to furthering the goals of universal access to clean water and sanitation — we were able to include in our delegation tribal leaders and other people working on tribal issues. What we're trying to do is help others learn, because we really need to understand each other.

Megdal on Water Use and Challenges to Water Supply in Arizona

The fastest-growing user of water in a growing Arizona has been the municipalities, the communities. The Salt River Project was the first large Bureau of Reclamation dam project to take and harness river waters so they wouldn't flood and direct them into the central Phoenix area. Back in the early 1900s, over 90% of the water use in the Salt River Project area was for agriculture. Now, over 90% of it is for municipalities. So over time, what we've seen is municipal use has grown on the pie chart. Our water use pies have not gotten much bigger, and we really are not using more water than we were using 30 years ago or even 40 years ago. But the pie slices have changed. Municipal [use] has grown, and agriculture [use] gotten smaller.



Lake Mead, at present, is only about one-third full. Photo provided by Sharon Megdal

Megdal on Creating a New Equilibrium for the Colorado River

The Colorado River is shared by seven U.S. states, the Republic of Mexico, and 30 tribal nations that have rights to Colorado River water, some of which are still in dispute and haven't been quantified. It's estimated that 40 million people depend on the river to some extent. It's not the only source of water, but demand for water is growing. At the same time, the supplies the river system is producing are shrinking, largely due to long-term drought. We're experiencing the driest period on record in 1,200 years. There's a big difference between 1,200 years ago and now, because now we have 40 million people and so much depending on the river.

So, in a nutshell, we have to get into a new equilibrium. We can't act like the river is producing 16 1/2 million acre-feet of water, which is kind of what it's been allocated, when the river's producing more like 14 or 15. Or, in recent years (except for 2023, which was a banner year for water), more like 12 million acre-feet of water. And sometimes the projections are showing it could go down to 9 million acre-feet of water.

What we've done over the past 20 years, with a few good years in there, is we've been pulling our savings. We had water saved up in Lake Mead — the storage behind Hoover Dam. It is the largest surface storage reservoir in the United States when full. Right now, it's about one-third full.

I use the analogy of drawing on savings. People may think, "Alright, I'm going to draw on savings, I need the income — but I'm going to go deposit more money in once I get that next paycheck." But then you lose your job.

That's the kind of analogy I've been using. We keep thinking that we're going to get a good winter. And over the last 23 years, we've only had a couple. So even with this winter question that comes up — is this winter helping? Sure, it's helping. It's not hurting, but it's not enough for us to say, "Hey, we're out of trouble here."

What we need to do, and I'm optimistic we can do it, is we need to adapt. And that means everybody — that means agriculture, that means communities, that means industry. This is truly one of those things — we're all in it together. So much of what is happening with the water community, on campus and elsewhere, is working on some of these solutions. How do we produce the same amount of food, or more, with less water? How do we reuse water? Some people don't want to think about reusing treated wastewater, but wastewater is treated to such high standards these days. And how do we use that? Do we use it for agriculture? Do we use it for people?

We're working on solutions, and everybody needs to be on deck to do the work. ◆



Amelia Flores, tribal chair of the Colorado River Indian Tribes | Photo provided by Amelia Flores

A Colorado River tribal leader seeks a voice in the river's future — and freedom to profit from its water. | By Nick Cahill, Western Water Education Foundation

As water interests in the Colorado River Basin prepare to negotiate a new set of operating guidelines for the drought-stressed river, Amelia Flores '08 wants her Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) to be involved in the discussion. More than that, she wants CRIT seated at the negotiating table with something invaluable to offer: its surplus water.

Flores, who graduated from the University of Arizona with a master's degree in linguistics, was recently named by Gov. Katie Hobbs to the Governor's Water Policy Council.

CRIT, whose reservation lands in California and Arizona are bisected by the Colorado River, has some of the most senior water rights on the river. But a federal law enacted in the late 1700s, decades before any southwestern state was even established, prevents most tribes from sending any water off their reservations. The restrictions mean CRIT, which holds the rights to nearly a quarter of the entire state of Arizona's yearly allotment of river water, is missing out on financial gain and the chance to help its river partners.

Flores, as CRIT's tribal chair, is leading her tribe's effort to persuade Congress to allow the tribe to lease or store its water off reservation lands like tribes in Arizona and other Colorado River Basin states with congressionally approved deals already can. If Congress grants the request by CRIT, Flores says, the tribe would offer water to aid struggling Arizona farmers and cities as well as wildlife restoration sites throughout the Lower Basin. The bill is pending in a U.S. Senate committee.

CRIT is composed of members from four distinct ethnic groups, the Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi and Navajo tribes, and has set its sights on having a voice in renegotiation of operating guidelines for the Colorado River, which must be renewed by 2026. Flores, the first woman to serve as CRIT's tribal chair, contends that the tribe has proven itself as a valuable partner by recently leaving water in Lake Mead to alleviate shortages. She hopes CRIT will finally have a voice in determining the river's future, unlike previous negotiations that were crafted without tribal input.

In an interview with Western Water, first published July 7, 2022, Flores explains CRIT's cultural ties to the Colorado River, the proposed legislation and the need for tribes to play larger roles in the upcoming renegotiations.

Q: You refer to the tribes as Aha Makhav, or people of the river. Can you talk briefly about the tribe's historical relationship with and its cultural ties to the Colorado River?

Our creator Mataviily created first the stars and the planets, and then, after he created the animals, he created the people. To go along with that, he created the river and laid aside the lands for us to live off of. The clan songs followed the river from Avii Kwa'ame, north of Laughlin, and the Newberry Mountain Range. That is our sacred mountain to the Mohave people. And not only to the Mohave but to the other tribes along the river. I can't leave out the mountains. The mountains are very sacred to the Mohave people, and they all have names. As stewards of the land and of the river, our identity is in the land and the water. We are the river.

Q: In December of 2020, you were elected by a wide margin to become the first female chair of the Colorado River Indian Tribes. What inspired you to run for the position and, as you said after the election, break the glass ceiling?

It goes back to me serving the tribal membership for 29 years as the librarian and archivist. And during that time, I was mentored by the Mohave elders, and these were male elders, about the history and the culture of our tribe. The knowledge they passed on

was inspiring, and I think that is part of me wanting to serve on the tribal council level. And so, it was just moving on to the next level (to become CRIT chair). Also, the passion that I have to serve and help my people is another part that inspired me to continue working for my people.

With the trust and the support of the people, I was elected. It was their support and their vote that broke the glass ceiling, not me. I can provide a woman's voice to the decisions and to the government.

Q: Under your leadership, CRIT is pursuing federal legislation that would allow it to lease or store some of its Colorado River water off the reservation. How would the bill benefit the tribe and how does it fit into broader efforts to share water across the entire Lower Colorado River Basin?

The CRIT Resiliency Act didn't happen overnight. Our past tribal councils had been looking at how we could get more benefit out of, and authority over, our water. Over at least the last 20 years, other tribes in Arizona started getting their settlements. With their settlements, they're able to lease their water that they use from the Colorado River.

The act will benefit our sovereignty, the recognition of our sovereignty as the Colorado River Indian Tribes. Also, from being able to lease — not sell, but lease — our water, there are financial benefits that will provide for our people, provide for the services, provide for our government, our employees and also it will provide funds to repair our irrigation system.

This bill is just another solution to saving the river and keeping water in Lake Mead, which we have been doing all along. We've kept over 200,000 acre-feet of water in Lake Mead through the Colorado River Drought Contingency Plan. We have shown and proven ourselves as CRIT that we do want to be part of the solution. We have first priority and the oldest priority water rights, so when shortages and cuts are being made as the levels go down in Lake Mead, the Central Arizona Project (CAP) will be cut. But with our bill, we can make water available for delivery through the CAP canal and keep that infrastructure going. We can provide a drought supply if the bill is passed.

Q: Looking ahead, what sort of role might CRIT and other tribal groups play in the discussions about the next set of river operating guidelines, which must be finalized by 2026? What are some of CRIT's main priorities heading into these renegotiations?

I can only speak for CRIT, not for the other tribes. But we all should play equal roles to the states in these discussions. Each tribe is vital, and for so long we've been left out of the discussions; we've been left out of when plans are developed. With the drought and given the conditions [on the river], we are now being invited to the table, which has been a wake-up call for the Bureau of Reclamation and the United States. We're all sovereign; we all have our own water rights. But ultimately the United States has its obligations to protect our resources — and that's not only water but other resources, like land for the individual tribes.

I think we need to remain vigilant. We need to hold the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the federal government to their policies. And I believe that through negotiation and being at the table, we have a better chance of holding them accountable. We don't ever want to go back to 10 years, even five years ago when we weren't consulted.

Q: What is your greatest concern with the Colorado River, especially given the drought?

My concern is that there's a risk the Colorado River could stop flowing if the megadrought continues. Although we would be the last to be cut, it would greatly impact our tribal government and our services to the people. It would impact our environment and the habitat preservation we have going on at the Ahakhav Preserve. I'm hanging on to hope that we have a change in our climate, but there's a possibility that no water could be flowing along the banks of the river.

Q: CRIT in recent years has participated in the 2019 Drought Contingency Plan and done things like fallow farmland in order to help avoid shortages elsewhere in the Lower Colorado River Basin. Do you think the federal government and the other river users will recognize and credit CRIT's cooperation and actions during the renegotiation process?

Oh yes. With the 200,000 acre-feet of water that we've already left in Lake Mead, I don't think they could overlook us anymore and what we have contributed. And we are now in a relationship with the Arizona Department of Water Resources and also CAP. So, in developing those relationships over the years, they see us as a vital part of saving the river. ◆

This interview was first published in Western Water, a publication of the Western Water Education Foundation.



Cisco Aguilar '00 '04 became Nevada's secretary of state in 2023. Photo provided by Cisco Aguilar

A 'FORREST GUMP' LIFE

Cisco Aguilar, Nevada's Latino secretary of state, embraces a path of deep purpose — and surprise. | By Matthew Morris

Ask Cisco Aguilar '00 '04 to name his political hero, and he won't mention Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr. or Susan B. Anthony. He won't name anyone you studied in school or could read about at a public library. Instead, he'll tell you about his grandfather, Frank Verdugo, who gave all he could to protect the rights of Latino miners in the Arizona towns of Hayden and Winkelman, right down to his life.

Verdugo, a union leader before OSHA — the Occupational Safety and Health Administration — became a local hero after his vehicle plunged from a bridge outside Hayden following a negotiation. In the moment, no one voiced suspicions around the fatal accident — at least, not out loud.

But "he died for what he believed," Aguilar says. "And he fought for what he believed."

In that second respect, like grandfather, like grandson.

In 2023, Aguilar, a graduate of Tucson's University High School who earned three degrees from the University of Arizona, became the secretary of state of Nevada, where he's lived since 2004. The role asks him to ensure the integrity of elections — including the general election slated for November 2024, in which the battleground state could play a pivotal part.

"Nevada," Aguilar says, "is going to determine who the next president of the United States is."

The state's first Latino secretary likens his journey to that of Forrest Gump, the folksy hero of the film by the same name who says "life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get."

Aguilar has worked alongside retired tennis superstars Stefanie Graf and Andre Agassi, serving as general counsel for both Agassi Graf, the couple's management company, and the Andre Agassi Foundation for Education, which supports public education for underserved children in and beyond Las Vegas. (And, yes, he's *briefly* knocked around tennis balls with each legend, though he's not a player.) He was among the youngest chairs in the history of the Nevada Athletic Commission, which oversees boxing and UFC, and spent a year in Herzogenaurach, Germany, with Adidas on a fellowship offered through the Robert Bosch Foundation.

His journey as a public figure began long ago, when he first arrived on campus as the son of a stay-at-home mother and an electrician father, neither of whom received a college education. Back then, Aguilar thought student government was for "nerds." But he soon met Joel Valdez '57, the Tucson and university leader for whom the city's downtown library — where

Aguilar worked during high school — is named.

Valdez, who served as city manager and Wildcat vice president of business affairs while championing diversity across a half century of public service, made a prediction: Aguilar would not only serve in the Associated Students of the University of Arizona, or ASUA; he would become student body president. It came true.

Valdez, Aguilar says, was "a lion of a person" with "such a quiet soul," someone who knew when to speak and when to listen. He taught Aguilar about diplomacy, a skill he leans on now.

Aguilar also leans on the concept of "community rent": the obligation of those in positions of power to give back to the people and places that formed them. He's lived in service to the idea, in part by spending 18 years on the board of Tucson's Marshall Foundation. Marshall, a private charity founded in 1930 to improve life for Pima County citizens, is a major donor to the Arizona Assurance scholarship program that gives underserved Wildcats the means to come to the university and the means to stay.

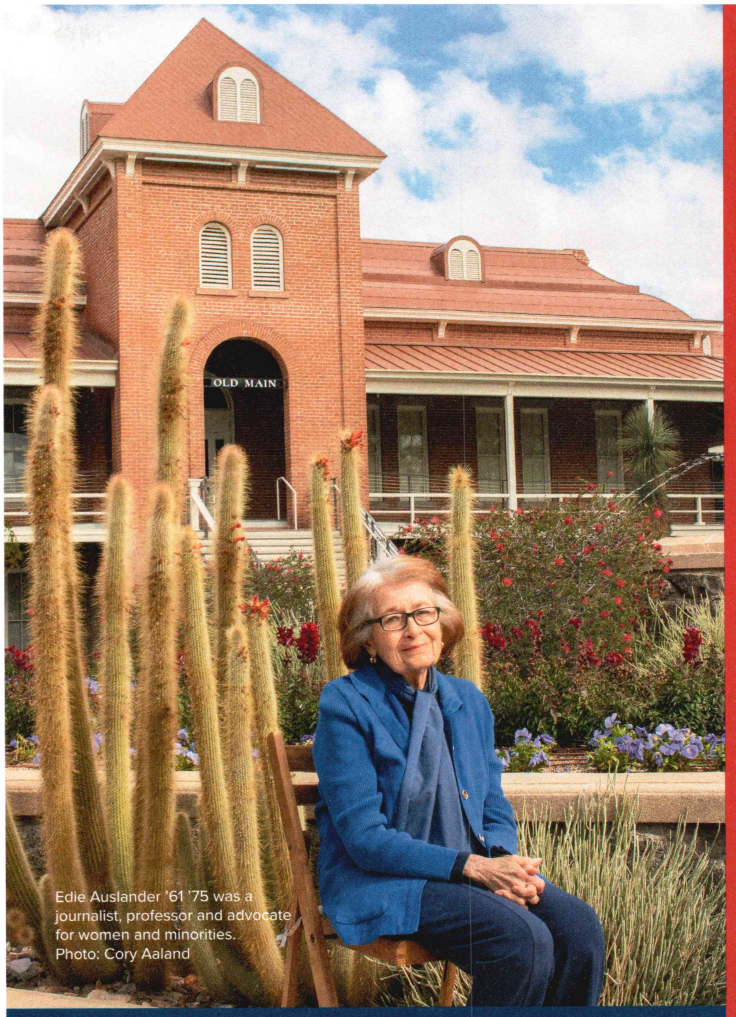
Creating opportunities for anyone, regardless of background, to receive an education remained central to Aguilar's purpose after he left Marshall to focus on projects in Nevada's Clark County — the nation's fifth-largest school district, where 3 in 4 students are from minority communities. In 2016, he became the founding chair of Las Vegas' rigorous Cristo Rey St. Viator College Preparatory High School. Eighty-six percent of the school's student body is Latino.

Aguilar, whose Democratic secretarial campaign received early support from Latino megawatt playwright Lin Manuel Miranda, says that his adopted state owes much to the Latino community. Latino workers, Aguilar notes, have been "significant" in building and maintaining the Vegas Strip, the city's corridor of casinos and resorts. He says that part of his job is to make sure the voices of those workers resound.

"They're working every day. And you look at the workers and understand, 'Hey, they are very like my tío, my tía. They are very similar to who I am,'" Aguilar says, using the Spanish words meaning "uncle" and "aunt." "Just because I am in this position doesn't make me any different."

Wherever his box-of-chocolates journey takes him next, Aguilar can draw on a lesson learned in Tucson.

"When you get into situations and they're tough, it's just remembering, 'Hey, this is time to Bear Down,'" Aguilar says. "That applies to every stage of life and every situation that's hard. You've got to have the fortitude to move forward." ◆



Edie Auslander '61 '75 was a journalist, professor and advocate for women and minorities. Photo: Cory Aaland

EDIE AUSLANDER

As a longtime Marshall Foundation board member, Cisco Aguilar knew well a stalwart of the Tucson and university communities: Edith "Edie" Auslander '61 '75, who died July 19, 2023, at the age of 83.

Auslander, a reporter and editor for the Arizona Daily Star and, later, a UArizona assistant professor of journalism, led fundraising for Arizona Assurance. She advocated for women and minorities throughout her career, becoming a founder of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists in 1984 and leading the effort to establish Arizona universities' Commission on the Status of Women seven years later.

A former Tucson Woman of the Year, Auslander also played a part in the construction of the Women's Plaza of Honor on campus.

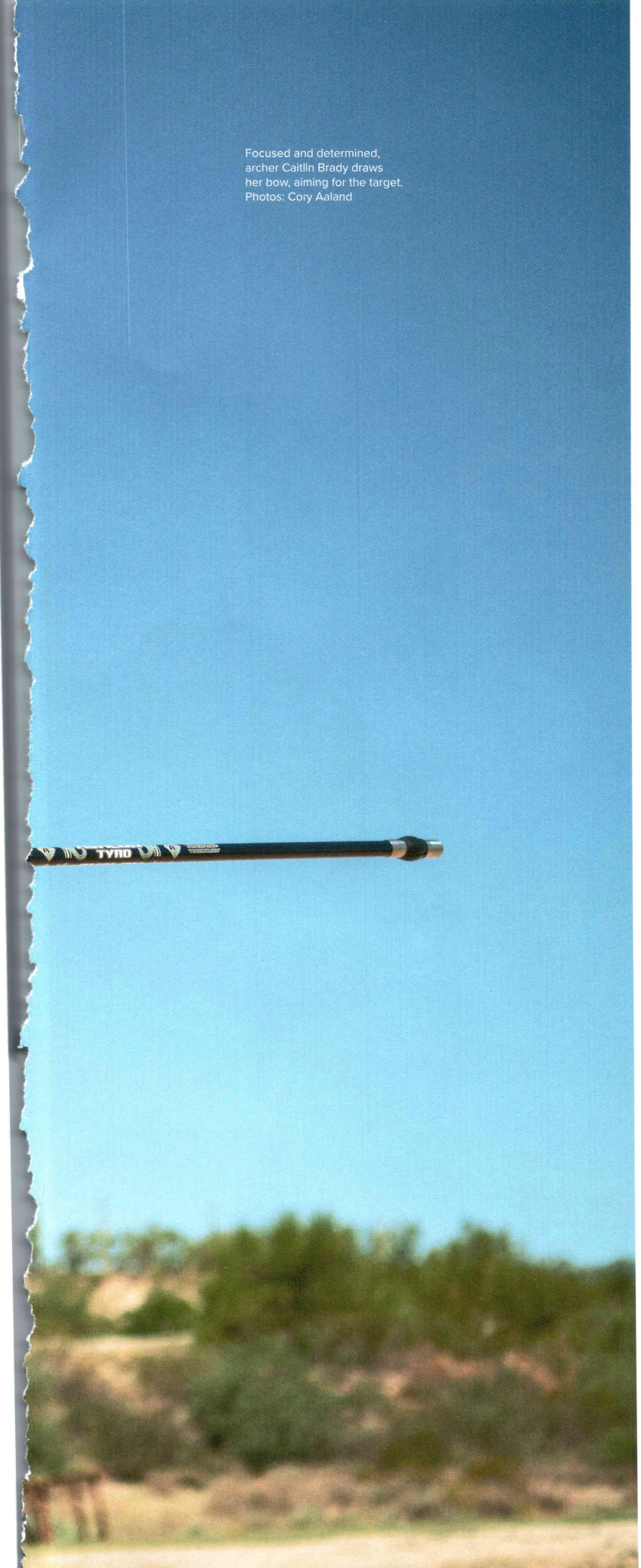
"The greatest thing about Edie is she could walk into any room and dominate," Aguilar says. "She was perfection when she was able to do the things that she did." Auslander's recent passing, he notes, comes just one year after that of Joel Valdez, who died in July 2022.

To support Arizona Assurance, visit give.uafoundation.org/azassurance.



BEHIND THE BOW

Wildcat Archery's tight-knit community aims for personal and athletic excellence. | By Zoe Montano



Focused and determined, archer Caitlin Brady draws her bow, aiming for the target. Photos: Cory Aaland

With feet planted on the ground, shoulders in line with the target, and muscles paired to the bow, the archer prepares to shoot.

Tension builds as they inhale, focus their eyes, and tighten their back muscles.

Three ... two ... one. The archer exhales, and their fingers release the string. The arrow hisses through the air, its tip piercing the target with a muffled thud.

While most students may use Sundays to catch up on sleep or recover from a busy week, members of the University of Arizona Wildcat Archery team hit the range by 9 a.m. to perfect their bowmanship.

The club welcomes all styles of archery, including both the classic recurve and the compound bow, as well as archers interested in both competitive and recreational archery.

Wildcat Archery had an established competitive team prior to the coronavirus pandemic. Once the pandemic struck, the club went into "hibernation," says Caitlin Wong, a computer science major.

In 2021, Wong and former member Maya Boyle '22 came together determined to restore the organization.

"We had to pick up the pieces and build everything together. Slowly but surely, we grew from five archers to 20-plus at each practice," Wong says.

The team found support in local duo Terry and Diana LaBeau. The coaching couple organized logistics, collected equipment donations and offered their experience as seasoned archers.

"A lot of newbies are here," Terry LaBeau says with a proud smile. "Really makes you feel good that we keep growing."

In 2022, Wong received Outstanding Sportsperson of the Year recognition from Campus Recreation for her exceptional coordination efforts and personal achievements as a competitor.

Wong first picked up a bow in ninth grade after stumbling across an archery booth at a gun show. After a reluctant start, she fell in love with competing. She has since participated in high-level competitions such as the Arizona Cup and SoCal Showdown. She hasn't entered the Olympic trials yet, but she's training for the future possibility. Archers at that level typically pull around 35 pounds in weight, sending arrows across distances equivalent to three-quarters of a football field.

The competition team has witnessed many of its students advance post-graduation. This past summer, for example, Elek Miller '23 was selected to represent Team USA in the World University Games in Chengdu, China.

According to LaBeau, the state of Arizona has some of the highest numbers of registered archers in the United States, with over 1,000 archers affiliated with USA Archery.

Hawaiian Natalianna Ferrara was primarily interested in attending UArizona because of the active scene. Ferrara, currently ranked 10th in the nation for collegiate archery, says she was introduced to the sport through the popular characters Katniss Everdeen in "The Hunger Games" and Merida in Disney's "Brave." Her participation in competitive archery, she says, affects her approach to her studies, strengthening not only her physical endurance but also her mental endurance.

"I can get up there, shoot this arrow and have confidence," Ferrara says. "That translated to every other aspect of my life. I can take a test and I'm like, 'OK, I know what I'm doing. I'm not afraid anymore.'"

When students aren't shooting arrows at practice, they can be found on the benches talking, laughing and engaging in team-building exercises.

Coaches and officers coordinate events aimed at uniting teammates and helping students polish their technique. At the end of the year, the team hosts its T-Shirt Painting Practice, where students aim at paint-filled balloons, creating one-of-a-kind pieces. In another tradition, called Suit Shoots, archers practice while dressed to the nines.

For first-time archer Brynn Atonna, it was the organization's friendly and inclusive environment that encouraged their pursuit of archery even after a rocky start.

"I showed up to my first practice and accidentally shot at the ground," Atonna says.

Despite the mishap, they decided to come back to the next practice, thanks to the welcoming attitude of the team members. "With me being a beginner, I had never even touched a bow. I had so many people coming to fix my form or tell me what I was doing wrong. And I really appreciated that," they say.

Atonna, who now serves as co-president, wants people to know that archery is not exclusive to hunters or a particular type of person.

"We let anyone and everyone participate," Atonna says. "We always want this to be a welcoming environment."

Linguistics major Sydney Greenspun echoes the statement, emphasizing that the club's goal is for students to gain more than just "picking up a bow." The most rewarding aspect of being part of the team, Greenspun says, is connecting with students from diverse experiences and majors.

"I have a disability," Greenspun says. "I was always told I couldn't do sports because I have a prosthetic. This was the last thing I thought I'd be doing in college — being on a sports team."

The main barrier collegiate archers face is financial. While recreational shooters might invest $200 for their own equipment, competitive teammates spend much more for equipment and travel. Ferrara estimates that she has paid $4,000 to $5,000 throughout her competitive career.

"A lot of our team is financially independent of their families," Ferrara notes. "But we try and do what we can to make it accessible."

The club works to make participation accessible by providing rental equipment, organizing fundraisers for competition travel and establishing a carpool system for students traveling to the off-campus Oro Valley Archery Range.

Ferrara says that archery is just like any other sport: If you love it, you want to keep doing it.

"We are just a bunch of weirdos who love to get together and shoot arrows at targets," she says.

Interested in supporting Wildcat Archery? Visit **give.uafoundation.org/archeryclub**. ◆



Caitlin Wong received Outstanding Sportsperson of the Year recognition from Campus Recreation.



Coaches Darrell Terrsey and Lawrence Brady guide archer Valentina Ayala.



Coach Diana LeBeau



Dylan Coles



Coach Lawrence Brady examines the target, touching the bull's-eye.



Redshirt freshman Noah Fifita became Arizona's starting quarterback midway through the 2023 season. Photos: Arizona Athletics



WINNING WILDCAT FOOTBALL

A 9-3 season guaranteed the 'Cats a trip to the Alamo Bowl. | By Sarah Kezele

On Nov. 27, 2021, Arizona football coach Jedd Fisch addressed reporters in a white, short-sleeved windbreaker, fumbling with his navy visor on the table in front of him. His team had just dragged to the finish of a one-win season — his first as Arizona's head coach — punctuated by a 38-15 loss to Arizona State in the Territorial Cup. Fisch said that day that, despite the Wildcats' paltry record, he was "excited beyond belief" for where the program was headed, and he knew they would soon become a "very, very good football team."

The program's turnaround since then has been nothing short of remarkable. The Wildcats turned in a 9-3 record this season, including four wins over top-25 teams, sending them to their first bowl game since 2017 and rocketing Fisch into the conversation for college football's Coach of the Year award.

The first two weeks of the season featured games against Northern Arizona and



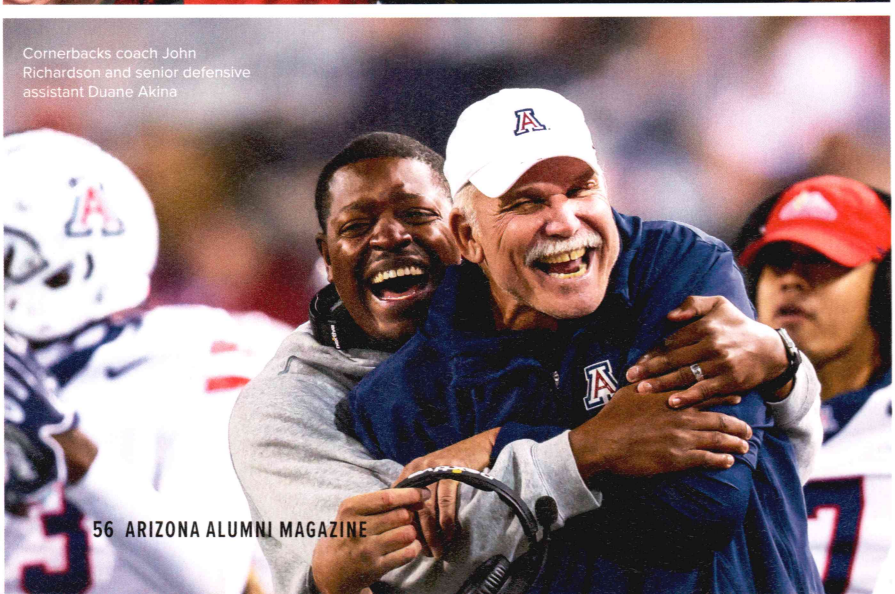
Junior Montana Lemonious-Craig, sophomore Tetairoa McMillan and senior Jacob Cowing, who are all wide receivers







Noah Fifita



Cornerbacks coach John Richardson and senior defensive assistant Duane Akina



Freshman offensive lineman Raymond Pulido, senior running back Michael Wiley and redshirt freshman offensive lineman Wendell Moe

Mississippi State, teams the Wildcats lost to in 2021 and 2022, respectively. Fisch says this year's rematches — a comfortable win over NAU and an overtime loss at Mississippi State — showed him a "totally different team" than the ones he coached his first two seasons in Tucson.

Still, Fisch did not know just how massive of a leap the program was about to take.

"I thought that we were going to build it up in Year 3," he says. "I didn't know how high we could go."

In Week 4 of the season, Arizona lost its starting quarterback, Jayden de Laura, to an ankle injury against Stanford. Redshirt freshman Noah Fifita stepped in and played a poised fourth quarter, guiding the Wildcats to a 21-20 win in Palo Alto.

In Weeks 5 and 6, with Fifita still under center, the Wildcats put the college football world on notice with a one-touchdown loss to No. 7 Washington and a triple-overtime loss at No. 9 Southern California. The Wildcats went into both games as heavy underdogs but came out the other side proving they could hang with anyone.

Fifita held on to the starting job the rest of the season, taking the team on a six-win run post-USC. Fifita's pièce de résistance came in the Wildcats' regular-season finale, a 59-23 win over ASU, when he set Arizona's single-game passing record with 527 yards and five passing touchdowns. His go-to target and former high school teammate, sophomore receiver Tetairoa McMillan, set the Territorial Cup record with 266 yards receiving, including a touchdown.

"Any time a freshman or redshirt freshman can step in and not miss a beat is surprising, a little bit, just because of [a lack of] experience and opportunity," Fisch says. "But what isn't surprising is, everything [Fifita] did in high school is what he's doing now. This was exactly the same type of player as he was when we recruited him two years ago. He was in control. He was confident. He kept his emotions in check."

With a promising young quarterback and a likely contract extension for Fisch, the foundation has been laid in the program's rebuild. Now, Fisch and his staff enter a critical window to keep the momentum going. The offseason will revolve around the coaching staff signing a new class of recruits and players hitting the weight room.

The final piece of the puzzle relies on the fans. Fisch says financial support through the Desert Takeover Football Collective is a "huge part" of creating long-term success. He also calls for a packed Arizona Stadium on game days, especially as Arizona joins the Big 12 Conference next season.

"We want the Big 12 to see the University of Arizona as the hardest place to play, and you don't get a second chance to make a first impression," he says.

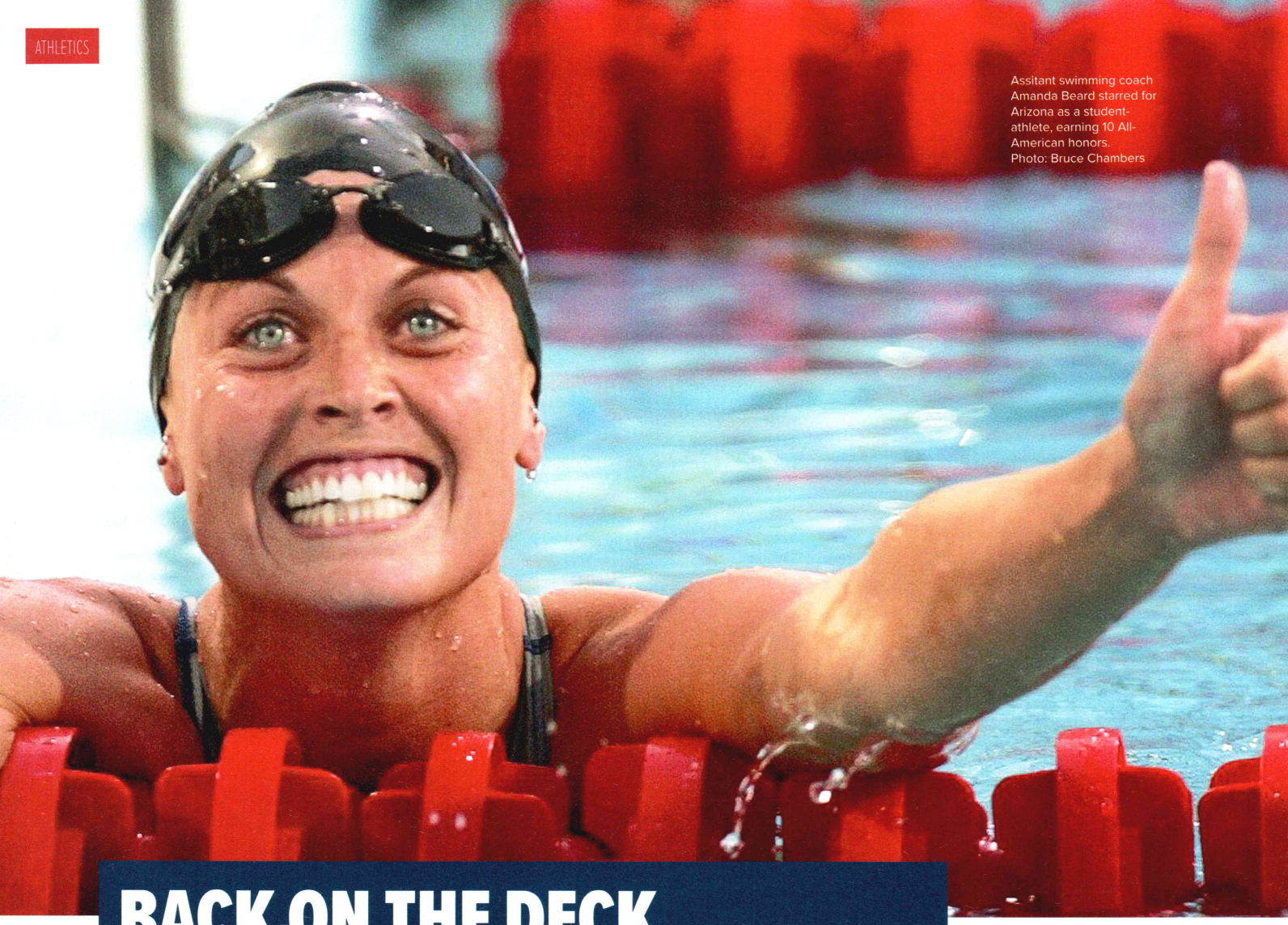
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Noah Fifita


Michael Wiley


Senior defensive lineman Bill Norton



Assitant swimming coach Amanda Beard starred for Arizona as a student-athlete, earning 10 All-American honors. Photo: Bruce Chambers

BACK ON THE DECK

New Wildcat assistant Amanda Beard reflects on her prolific Arizona and Olympic swimming careers.

With seven Olympic medals to her name, Amanda Beard is the most decorated Olympian ever to come out of the University of Arizona. She swam for the Wildcats from 1999-2001 under legendary coach Frank Busch, winning an individual NCAA title and collecting 10 All-American honors. Now, she is back on the pool deck at Hillenbrand Aquatic Center as an assistant coach alongside Frank's son, head coach Augie Busch.

Sarah Kezele '11 spoke with Beard ahead of her first season on staff.

Arizona fans have been so excited to see you come back to the program. How have you felt about the reaction to your return?

It's been overwhelming in the most wonderful way possible. We were gone for about 9 1/2 years, and I think I only came back once in that timeframe. I feel like I'm home again, and it's just a wonderful feeling. I'm like, "Why did I ever leave?" I'm very humbled by the opportunity and just extremely grateful.

Why did you want to join Arizona's staff?

I have so much respect for Augie Busch. I've known him for about 25 years, and just listening to him talk about his athletes and the passion that he has for the program, that's how I feel. Some of the best years of my life were in this environment, this community. And I thought about how much I could learn from standing on a pool deck with him and being a sponge, absorbing as much as I possibly can to be the best assistant coach for this program.

You've medaled multiple times at the Olympics and World Championships, you've held world records and you've been inducted into the International

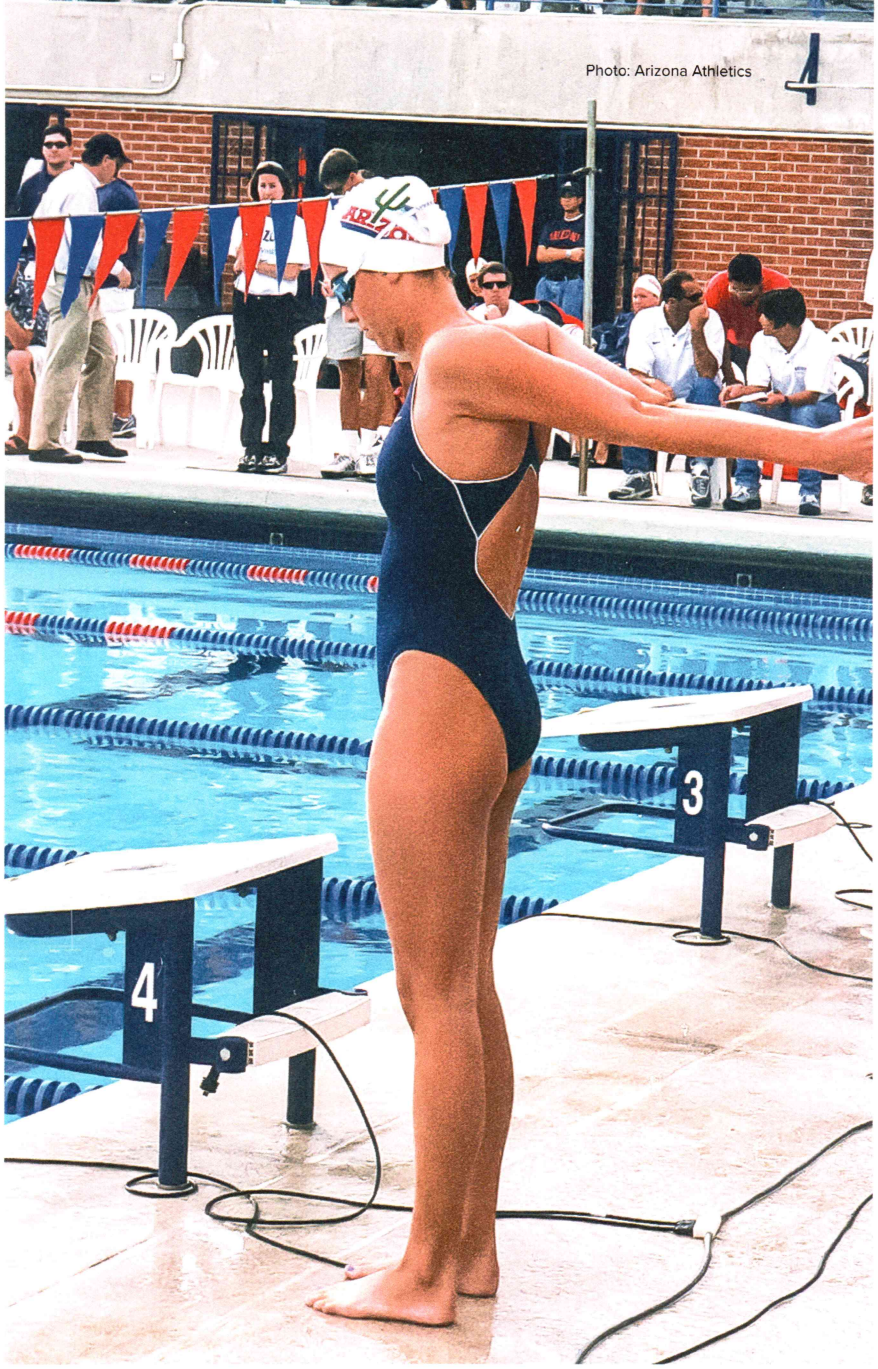


Photo: Arizona Athletics



Photo: Arizona Athletics

Swimming Hall of Fame. Of all your accomplishments, what are you most proud of?

There are two moments in my Olympic swimming career that really stand out to me. One is winning bronze at the 2000 Olympics. I was struggling at that part of my athletic career. I almost had written off ever competing in the Olympics again (after winning gold and two silvers at the 1996 Olympics), because I just wasn't performing the same way in the water. But I came to Arizona and got that fire back in me, and I started to slowly climb up that ladder again. So, by the time 2000 rolled around, I ended up making that Olympic team and winning a bronze medal. I never imagined being able to climb back up to that point physically and mentally.

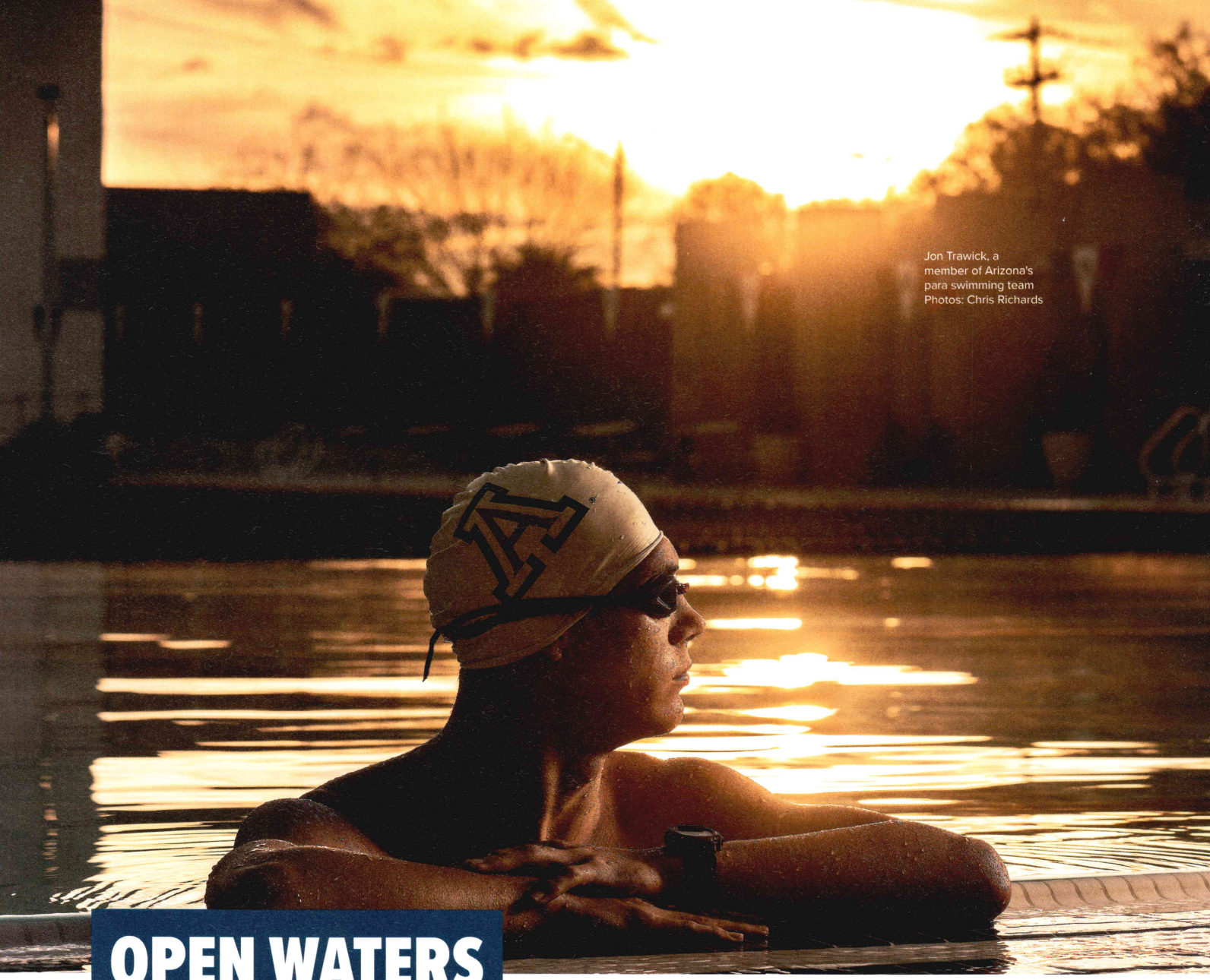
And then, my gold medal in 2004. Standing on top of a podium and celebrating your country, it's hard to beat those moments.

When you think back on your time in Tucson and what you learned from Frank Busch, are there any moments or lessons that stand out to you most?

Oh, yeah. We'd go for runs or have to run the football stadium, and you'd want to be mad, like, "This is the worst." And then you'd see Frank running with you. I was 18 and he was, like, 50 years old, and I'm thinking, "OK, I can't complain." He was one of those people that, when he talked, you really wanted to listen. He would have conversations with us that had nothing to do with swimming, but about us as individuals and as people. I think that's very important, because a lot of athletes don't know how to identify with anything aside from being an athlete. He'd have conversations where I was just Amanda, not Amanda the swimmer. It made me feel more valued as a whole human.

There are now multiple assistants on this staff that are from the Frank Busch era. What are some of the traits or principles that you recognize in people who came up under him?

Lots of discipline. I think back to those freezing early mornings, and he'd give me certain times that he wanted me to do on my next set — and I'd look at him like he was crazy, but he was dead serious, and then he'd just walk away. But then, I could do it. It's one of those things where he knew what we were capable of and how to get us there, even if it seemed absolutely ridiculous to us. Without having to demand it, he just had this respect across the pool deck. ◆



Jon Trawick, a member of Arizona's para swimming team
Photos: Chris Richards

OPEN WATERS

Adaptive athletes bring their sports dreams to Arizona's para swimming program. | By Matthew Morris

Jon Trawick has undergone 19 spinal surgeries, about one for each year of his life. The aspiring Paralympian, whose main diagnosis is cerebral palsy, has an L4/L5 lumbar fusion, which reduces his mobility, balance and fine motor skills. He can't swim the butterfly — and the breaststroke, he says, produces "a lot of pain and pressure."

But Trawick can swim both the backstroke and the freestyle, and his life is defined not by his disability but by his expanding confidence in the pool. That truth likely holds for many members of the Arizona para swimming team, which is part of the university's adaptive athletics program — the largest and most successful program of its kind in the country.

"While I do have a lot of work to do, a lot of who I am is because of para swimming," says Trawick, clad in a T-shirt reading "Positive Athlete" before an early fall practice at the Student Recreation Center. "Because I'm an athlete, and I've had to manage my time. I've had to be in good shape. I've had to make friends."

Trawick began swimming in the seventh grade, after one of his surgeries. He'd been doing aquatic physical therapy, which was easier on his legs and back than dryland exercises. Seeing his comfort in the water, his physical therapist encouraged him to try out for the team at his Georgia high school. Trawick approached the coach, saying, "I've never swum before, and I'm disabled. Are you willing to give me a shot?"

The answer was yes. And "from there," Trawick says, "I just got better and better."

Last summer, the neuroscience major moved across the country to join a team that coach Laura Utsch, a former Brigham Young University backstroker, emphasizes is "like any other," at least in the way of habits and goals. "We take each individual where they are," she says, "and work hard and try to get better."

Even so, Utsch acknowledges her team's pride of place in history.

Arizona's collegiate para swimming program is the first in the nation, and for now, it is also the only. Founded in 2021, the 12-member team competes in meets put on by U.S. Paralympics Swimming — like the California Classic held in Yucaipa last September, where Utsch's roster was by far the largest. Most of the athletes at the classic, Utsch says, came with a single teammate or by themselves.

Arizona's team — which today has 10 student-athletes, two of whom are para triathletes, and two community members — was in about the same place as recently as 2022, when three swimmers made up the roster. Trawick was part of the program's first recruiting class. Now, "the swimmers have other swimmers to make a team where they can belong," Utsch says. "It's hard to feel like you're part of something when you're the only one in it."

Utsch founded the Tucson nonprofit Find Your Fins in 2014, offering free and low-cost swim lessons to veterans, people with disabilities and people with addictions. Through her decades in the pool, she understands the transformative impact that swimming can make in a person's life. Even if student-athletes like Trawick hope to someday reach the Paralympics, she also just wants them to receive water's gifts.

"Swimming is important for anyone, but especially people with disabilities," Utsch says. "Water offers us so many great things. Freedom — everyone who swims says water is a place of freedom. It takes away gravity. It takes away so many things that are on land.

"It's just forgiving. It's a supportive and forgiving place."

With her team, the coach focuses on form, not lap times. Many of her swimmers have, in the past, had to sacrifice technique to try to keep up with their able-bodied teammates. Trawick, for one, was the only adaptive athlete on his high school team. Now, Utsch is slowing things down so that he can later speed up. "She says, 'Don't worry about speed — figure out control,'" he says. "Because if you control your stroke, you're going to get faster anyway."

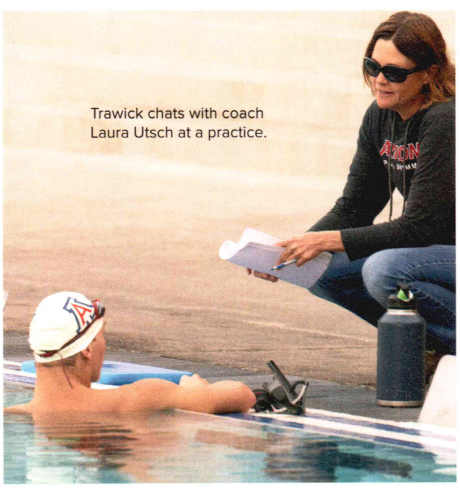
The coach has her eyes on the future in more ways than one. She is careful to note that while the team makes a profound difference in her swimmers' lives, there is distance to travel yet in leveling the playing field for adaptive athletes. She coaches the team alone, for instance, and describes herself as "super part time." The program also is not funded at the same level as Arizona's able-bodied teams. "People with disabilities have massive hurdles daily," Utsch says. "And the disparity continues right here."

Nonetheless, that the team exists at all has changed outcomes for Trawick and others. Its latest member, Mehraneh Mohseni Zadeh Harouzi, has told Utsch that she feels an excitement about swimming that she hasn't felt about anything aside from her move to the United States, which came in 2020.

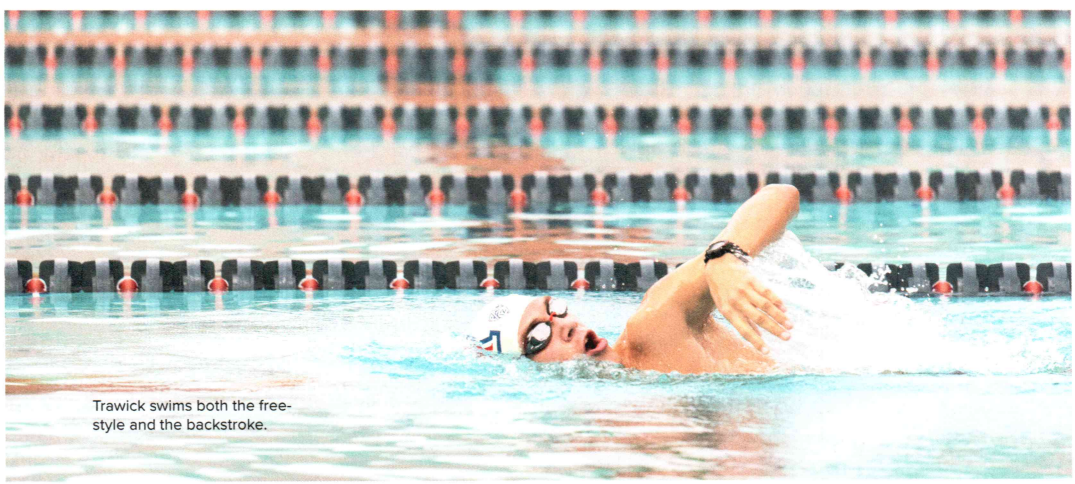
Trawick, for his part, has certainly pushed into open waters — into a space he never expected to reach. At the Ron Johnson Invitational, a U.S. Masters meet held at Arizona State in November, he set personal bests in the 50- and 100-meter freestyle. And at Arizona, he receives tuition assistance, as do all Wildcat adaptive student-athletes.

"I didn't think I was going to be doing any sports in college, but then Arizona reached out," he says. "Not only did that allow me to go to college but it allowed me to go to college and do what I love."

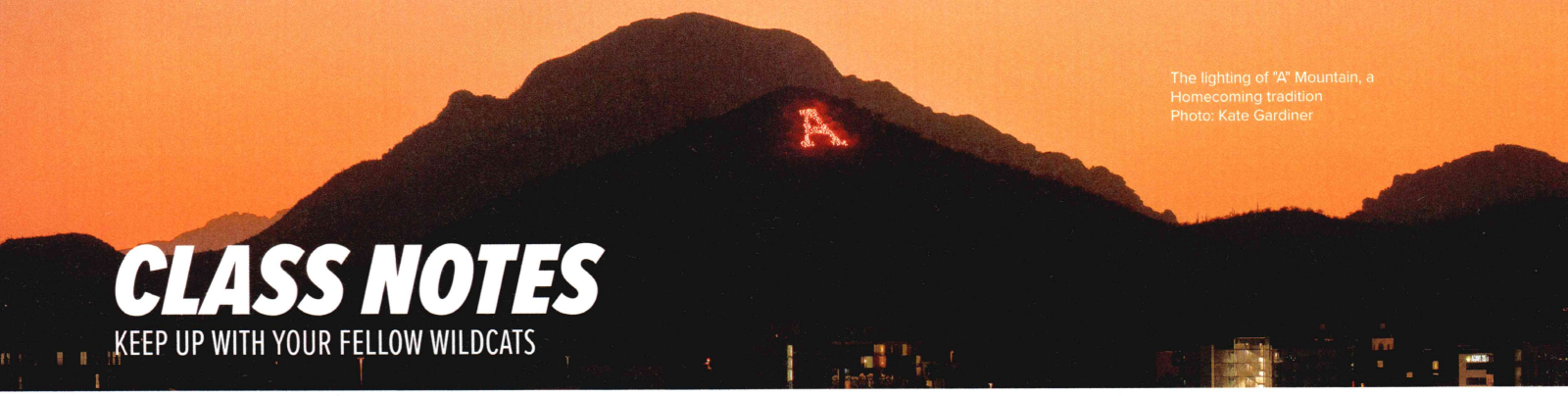
To support the para swimming team, visit **give.uafoundation.org/paraswimming**. ◆



Trawick chats with coach Laura Utsch at a practice.



Trawick swims both the free-style and the backstroke.



The lighting of "A" Mountain, a Homecoming tradition
Photo: Kate Gardiner

CLASS NOTES

KEEP UP WITH YOUR FELLOW WILDCATS

1960s

James Coan '66 published two books through University of Alabama Press, "Con Thien: The Hill of Angels" and "Time in the Barrel: A Marine's Account of the Battle for Con Thien." James was inspired to write about the famous battles after his time as a U.S. Marine officer during the Vietnam War.

Cheryl Hogan '69 published "The Adventures of Lucca," a children's book telling the story of a fluffy white volpino named Lucca. Each page is filled with lesson plans and subjects to explore, including topics like facing fear with courage, dog training, math puzzles and more. Cheryl's aspiration is that her book will inspire and bring joy to students who missed lessons due to school closures during the pandemic. Her book is available through Amazon, libraries and local bookstores.

1970s

Dan LeGrady '72 remembers his years as a student at the College of Pharmacy as both challenging and exceptional, his classmates as both seriously committed and happy to just socialize. Dan went on to serve as an assistant professor at Creighton University, a prescription drug consultant at Mutual of Omaha and a clinical coordinator at Antelope Valley Hospital in California. He also has published work in peer-reviewed journals and was included in a "who's who in the Midwest" in 1990.

Anne Broyles '75 published "I'm Gonna Paint: Ralph Fasanella, Artist of the People" (Holiday House), a children's picture book narrating the life of visionary folk artist and labor organizer Ralph Fasanella. Debuting with starred reviews, Anne's book focuses on themes of social justice, immigrant rights and labor rights, inspiring a new generation to continue the fight for better working conditions.

Millicent Eidson '75 published "Corona: A Microbial Mystery" through Maya Maguire Media. It's the third book of the Maya Maguire series. The medical thriller follows the story of veterinarian and detective Maya Maguire, whose focus shifts from COVID-19 cases in humans to coronavirus in animals.

Mike Weedall '78 published "War Angel: Korea 1950" (Outskirts Press). This historical fiction book tells the story of the courageous women who served in the Korean War. Mike was inspired to write the story after learning that until 1956, only women were allowed to be U.S. Army nurses. Mike based the story on experiences from veterans who served behind the front lines.

Diane Murphy '79 published "Down, Down, Down," a fantasy novel she dreamed of before she studied playwriting at the University of Arizona 45 years ago. The book tells the story of an old detective who gets a do-over in his life. The price is a journey into hell. For Diane, publishing a book at 67 feels like a do-over too. Learn more at bydmmurphy.com.

1980s

Bernard Jankowski '84 published "Music in the Halls: The Heart and Heartbreak of Teaching in a High-Poverty School in Washington, DC" (Regal House Press). The book was featured at the Maryland State School Counselors Conference and hailed as a "masterwork" by Grace Cavalieri, poet laureate of Maryland. Bernard is the head of the English department and an Advanced Placement teacher at an educational facility serving adolescents with severe emotional disabilities.

Joseph Starwood '84 was promoted to worldwide mining industry leader at Microsoft. In his new role, he plans to shape Microsoft's strategy to better serve mining clients and partners. Joseph applies his experience as an exploration geologist and geophysicist to improve mining profitability, safety and sustainability. He is committed to advancing diversity, equality and inclusion in the mining industry.

Wendy Videlock '84 has become a critically acclaimed poet whose work has appeared in O, The New York Times, The Hudson Review and other prominent literary venues. Wendy has received numerous awards for her books, published through Able Muse Press. Most recently, she was awarded the 2022 Cantor Poetry Prize. Wendy serves as the poet laureate of western Colorado, which comprises 32 counties. She currently resides in the small agricultural town of Palisade.

Jilanne Hoffmann '85 published "A River of Dust: The Life-Giving Link Between North Africa and the Amazon" (Chronicle Books), a children's book that explores the journey of dust between continents and its impact on the Earth's ecosystems. At the end of the book, readers can find information on plate tectonics, Amazon and

Atlantic ecosystems, and NASA Earth observation satellites while discovering how scientists use computer models to analyze climate change's influence on weather and dust.

Michael Murphy '85 was named a 2023 Power Player in Arizona's Unsung Heroes of Public Service by the Arizona Capitol Times. In 2022, he climbed Mount Kilimanjaro — the highest peak in Africa — with eight burn survivors and with medical staff from the Arizona Burn Center, raising funds for a new center in the process. Michael is the communications director at Valleywise Health in Phoenix.

Suzi Usdane Wall '85 published her first book, "Get Out of Your Head and Into Your Heart: Integrating the Mind and Heart" (Balboa Publishing). The book was inspired by Suzi's 35 years of professional experience in the field of mental and behavioral health.

Dharshi Bopegedera '89 received the E. Ann Nalley Northwest Regional Award for Volunteer Service to the American Chemical Society. The award recognizes the volunteer efforts of an individual who has served the society, contributing significantly to its goals and objectives through their regional activities. A physical chemistry professor at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, Dharshi has been an active member of the ACS since 1987 and a member of the Puget Sound section since 1991.

1990s

Daniel Kates '92 was promoted to senior vice president and global head of medical affairs for Cytokinetics Inc., a San Francisco Bay Area biotechnology company focused on developing potential medicines to improve the health span of individuals with cardiovascular and neuromuscular diseases of impaired muscle function. Daniel and his wife, **Jamie Kates '94**, reside in Sedona, where they enjoy frequent visits from his brother, **Marc Kates '86**, and sister, **Michelle Kates Kort '90**.

Habib Pierce-Byrd '97 '01 '02 was named the 2023 Sharon A. Fullmer Legal Aid Attorney of the Year. The award recognizes a legal service lawyer in Arizona whose service encompasses advocacy both on behalf of individuals in extreme need and to address systemic issues affecting significant numbers of low-income people. Habib serves as a senior staff attorney for Southern Arizona Legal Aid Inc.

Matt Sullivan '98 was played by Chris Messina in the biographical film "Dreamin' Wild." After college, Matt started an independent record label, Light in the Attic Records. The label distributes vinyl soundtracks for films, recently releasing the soundtrack for "Barbie." In addition, Light in the Attic Records re-releases archival recordings from such artists as Betty Davis, Willie Nelson, The Grateful Dead and Nancy Sinatra.

2000s

La Monica Everett-Haynes '01 '10 '16 was named among the Top 50 LGBTQ+ Leaders of Influence for 2023 in San Diego. The award recognizes exceptional leadership and dedication in business. La Monica is an associate vice president and the chief communication officer at San Diego State University.

Jessica Radloff '01 published her first book, "The Big Bang Theory: The Definitive, Inside Story of the Epic Hit Series" (Grand Central Publishing). The book takes a behind-the-scenes look at the popular sitcom and is filled with exclusive interviews with producers and cast members. The book is a New York Times and USA Today bestseller. Jessica is a senior editor at Glamour magazine.

Laura Resau '02 co-authored "Stand as Tall as the Trees: How an Amazonian Community Protected the Rain Forest" alongside Ecuadorian leader Patricia Gualinga. The book is available in English and Spanish versions through Charlesbridge Press. The children's picture book recounts the true story of how Patricia's Kichwa community won an inspiring victory after an oil company invaded their land. Kirkus called it "a moving account of those who spoke truth to power and triumphed."

Brianna Rhue '04 is a practicing optometrist and co-founder of Dr. Contact Lens. Brianna's company was recently ranked No. 41 on the Inc 5000 list of the fastest-growing private companies. While in school, Brianna was a cheerleader and member of Delta Gamma. She wants to continue to inspire women to go for their dreams and create business solutions to share with the world.

Varsha Sharma '05 reflects on her master's thesis, which yielded a theoretical framework in design for sacred spaces and led to her position as the chief architect for the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium — the world's largest Hindu temple, which has a target inauguration date of 2025. Varsha also has been entrusted with a pivotal role in assembling the International Vedic Cultural Centre in Nagpur, India.

Sam Swift '06 was selected as the chief executive officer of TCI Wealth Advisors. Sam joined the company in 2006 and has showcased an innate ability to simplify complex ideas for clients, encouraging them along their financial journey. In addition to being an adviser, Sam is a shareholder and leads TCI's investment committee. Sam also serves as the board president for the Primavera Foundation. When he isn't working, he spends time with his family enjoying the beauty of Southern Arizona.

Laura Castillo '07 '11 was promoted to deputy library director for the Phoenix Public Library. Laura graduated from UArizona's School of Information Resources and Library Science, which

has since merged with the School of Information Science, Technology, and Arts to form the School of Information or iSchool, the only American Library Association-accredited program in the state. Laura also became engaged to Jeanette Padilla, who is currently enrolled in her first UArizona course.

Fernando Barraza '08 '09, chief executive officer of Kuadra Support, a nearshore outsourcing firm, announced that Arizona's largest locally owned public accounting firm, BeachFleischman PLLC, has acquired the majority ownership stake in Kuadra. Fernando also is a principal and international tax practice leader with BeachFleischman.

Desiree Smith '08 is the director of talent acquisition for Early Warning Services (Zelle/Paze). She hosts career and internship opportunities for Wildcats, benefiting from her 360-degree experience as a former student who applied for jobs through UArizona's Student Engagement and Career Development center. With over 15 years of experience recruiting Wildcats, Desiree continues to advocate for UArizona students through her ongoing partnerships with the university.

Tylor Brand '09 composed a monograph, "Famine Worlds: Life at the Edge of Suffering in Lebanon's Great War," published in August by Stanford University Press. The book provides a haunting in-depth look at life on the ground during one of the terrible disasters of the 20th century: the Lebanese famine of World War I. Though about a crisis of the past, the monograph's themes resonate today. Tylor is an assistant professor of Near and Middle Eastern studies at Trinity College in Dublin.

2010s

Garrett Smith '10 was named to the Best-in-State Next-Gen Wealth Advisors list published by Forbes. The list recognizes financial advisers who have demonstrated high levels of ethical standards, professionalism and success in business. Garrett is a financial adviser with Affirm Wealth Advisors, a private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial Services LLC. Garrett recently obtained the Behavioral Financial Advisor designation.

Devin DeAngelis-Kerzich '11 published "The Adventures of Kitt and Gianna: Paris, France," a children's book that follows the escapades of Kitt, a curious young boy, and his food-loving dog, Gianna. Devin was inspired to write a story encouraging families to travel together after a recent trip with her infant to Paris. The book is available through both Barnes & Noble and Amazon.

Rebecca Jones '11 published "Stemming the Tide" (Bella Books), the second novel in the Mackenzie Wilson series. The book follows the twists and turns of a high-profile case in Tucson and the private lives of the female characters pursuing justice. The first novel in the series, "Steadying the Ark," was a finalist for the 2023 Golden Crown Literary Society Goldie Awards for Mystery/Thriller/Crime novels. Rebecca is a criminal appeals attorney and lives in Phoenix with her girlfriend and dogs.

Mike Gombrich '12 received a 2023 Five Star Wealth Manager Award. This is Mike's fifth consecutive year receiving the award, which recognizes less than 7% of the wealth managers in a region based on research administered by Five Star Professional. Mike is a private wealth adviser at Ameriprise Financial Services and has 10 years of experience in the financial services industry.

Brendan O'Connor '12 published "Multilingual Baseball: Language Learning, Identity, and Intercultural Communication in the Transnational Game" (Bloomsbury Academic), the first book-length study of language diversity in professional sports.

Tim Tiutan '12 was recently invited to be interviewed by Gayle King on CBS Mornings. Known as "Dr. Tim" on social media, he has a successful educational platform on Instagram and TikTok, with over 1 million followers. His content focuses on health education and cancer prevention. He completed his residency at New York Presbyterian Hospital – Cornell Campus and is an internal medicine physician at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. He also is an assistant professor at Weill Cornell Medicine.

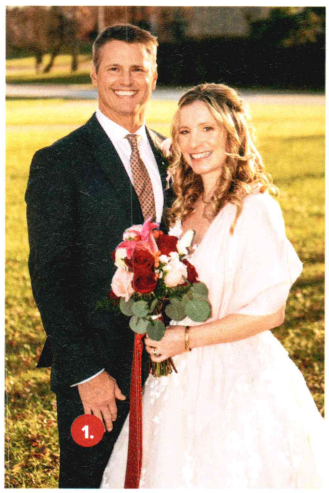
Julie Wilson-McNerney '13 joined Schwabe's Seattle office as part of the real estate and construction and natural resources industry groups. Julie has over a decade of experience helping developers build commercial, industrial and infrastructure projects. She focuses her practice on navigating complex regulatory requirements, environmental review, water supply, and land use and negotiations with agencies, Native American tribes, and project neighbors.

Miguel Bojorquez '16 published his first book, "The Dreamer," now available exclusively on Amazon. The cross-genre work combines horror, poetry and technothriller themes to tell the story of Breanna Marie as she embarks on a journey to uncover the truth about her existence. Miguel's late sister, a fellow graduate, served as inspiration.

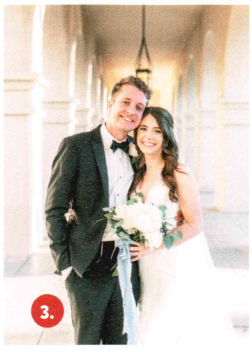
Brad Sinesi '17 released his debut hip-hop album, "Royal Blood," in June under the stage name Elektra Prince. He has produced 42 genre-bending EDM singles departing from the norm but mainstream in appeal. He makes music from his home in the Hollywood Hills and can be found on all music streaming platforms.

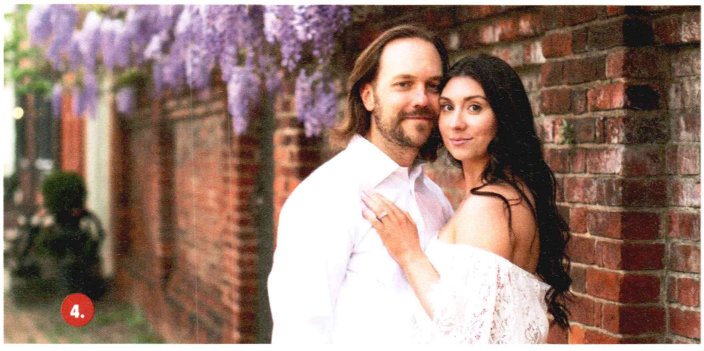
Kelsea Hill '18 graduated from the University of Wisconsin in May 2023 with a doctor of veterinary medicine degree. Kelsea is now completing a residency at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

WEDDINGS AND FAMILIES









1. **Sarah Allinson Pettey '04** and John Pettey, of Baltimore, were married.

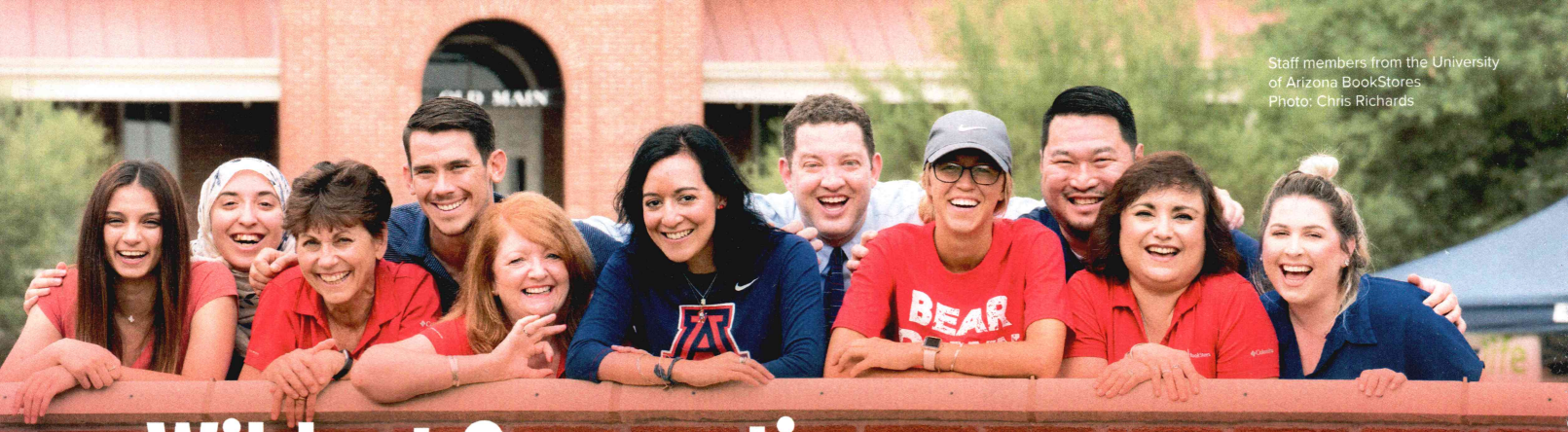
2. **Megan McGrane '07**, a former Wilma Wildcat mascot, and her husband, CJ, welcomed future Wildcat Hannah McGrane July 20, 2023. Proud grandparents include alumni **Sue Callahan Campbell '78** and **Mark Campbell '78**.

3. **Katherine Lynch '17** and **Andrew Marini '17** were married Feb. 25, 2023, in Scottsdale. The couple met during their first year in the Arizona-Sonora dormitory. They will celebrate 10 years together in April.

4. **Skylar Duhon '21**, a member of Gamma Phi Beta, and Kyle Brotherton were married March 3, 2023, in Alexandria, Virginia.

FAREWELL, DEAR FRIENDS | Honoring Wildcats who have passed away

Elizabeth M. Moody '40
Edythe K. Swann '42
Lola B. White '42
Roy E. Coulson '48
Frank R. Barreca '49 '70
Hugh M. Hofmann '49
Virginia S. Kingsolver '49
Paul T. Loef '50
Willis H. Brimhall '51
Harry S. Amster '52
Marilyn J. Ludwig '52 '56
Eva J. McDuff '53
Louis P. Benedict '56
Ralph A. Heinze '56
Marlan L. Askren '57
G. Norman Christensen '57
Joseph Fairbanks '57 '68 '72
Henry F. Kupper '57
Edward J. Saba '57
Raymond S. Plock '58
Jack I. Redhair '58 '62
Keith A. Krumwiede '59
Henry H. Borland '60
Hilmer A. Carlberg '60 '63
Arthur Solomon '60 '64
Edith S. Auslander '61 '75 '98
Ronald L. Brown '61 '63
Ronald G. Dewey '61
Archie T. Gordon '61
Nancy L. Alexander '62
Charles M. Giles '62 '64
Jim O. Berg '63
David Bray '63
Geraldine H. Holland '63
David Brod '64
Sharon K. Footlick '64
Louise C. Singer '64
Lillian E. Armer '65
D. Mike Barber '65
Michael P. Finerty '65 '71 '74
Carl J. Kennedy '65
Richard W. Lynch '65
Ellen R. Capener '66
Georgeanne R. Fimbres '66
Frederick A. Krause '66 '68
Jessie M. Zander '66 '76
John L. Kidder '67
Patrick C. Lennan '67
William J. Lillis '67 '68 '72
Edwin P. Pierce '67 '78
Gerald L. Poe '67
Stephen A. Snakard '67
Ann B. Buckmaster '68
Dennis R. DeVault '68
Freddie L. Guthrie '68
Burks A. Smith '68
Paul L. Askren '69 '72
Frank M. Casanova '69
John F. Hinck '69 '71
Margaret Horton '69 '73
Roger E. Schoenherr '69
Mark G. Elliott '70
Christopher J. Hillman '70
Carmen L. Matsuda '70
Miriam R. Soisson '70
Teresa N. Fouste '71
David S. Hoffman '71
William A. Jeffry '71
Joan F. Clark '72
Michael M. Howell '72 '76
Harvey A. Kaplan '72
Kathleen A. McCarthy '72 '76
Phillip J. Reeves '72
Dallas K. Renoud '72
Daniel K. Saz '72
Marlin E. Widger '72
Phyllis Petersen Adams '73
John R. White '73
Robert E. Wilson '73 '80
Dale C. Ferguson '74
Stanley E. Weightman '74
David L. Dunbar '76
Stephen C. Castle '77
Larry A. Chapman '77 '83
Paul M. Preston '77
Joan C. Cowell '78
Cathy L. Francke '79
Robert G. Sadorf '79
Michael B. Bidwell '80
James W. Thelander '81
Deanna D. Nichols '82 '90
William L. Zadina '82
Sydney D. Dye '83
Ronald W. Fillman '83
Dan P. Lozano '83
Susan F. Smith '83
Patricia M. Reber '84
Lee R. Thorn '84
Scott E. Workinger '85
Elizabeth A. Beeby '86
Neil D. Job '86
Inger M. Sandal '88
Darcy R. Renfro '89 '00
Paul S. John '90
Michael J. Whitfield '92
Carrie A. Phillips '93 '97
Alfred J. Trejo '93
Erin M. Zeller '93
Mark I. Anderson '94
Robert A. Cloud '95
Melinda L. Hill '95
Paul J. Lakers '95
James Schwiegerling '95
Jennifer A. Turner-Valle '95 '98
Paul T. Hoffmann '99
Jenny D. Coomler '01
Kenneth C. Spafford '01
Katy L. Ruiz Gazda '07
Rebekah L. Thomas '07
Jason E. Kinnear '09
Jacob H. Maisch '15
Russell A. Cormier '16



Staff members from the University of Arizona BookStores
Photo: Chris Richards

Wildcat Connections

The power of alumni networking is at your fingertips. | By Zoe Montano



ALUMNI NETWORKS

From the Bay Area to New York City, alumni networks share a common goal: to create a sense of connection among local Wildcats.

With over 200 dedicated board members, alumni networks offer support through family-friendly gatherings, networking events and service projects.

Alejandro “Alex” Reynoso ’74 established the Salt Lake City SkiCats after seeing a demand for alumni networking in his city. Through bowling events, baseball games and Oktoberfest festivities in the mountains, the SkiCats have created a close-knit community.

Reynoso wishes more people would look into alumni networking. Having been uprooted throughout his career, he says he has learned that family does not always have to be blood, and networking can provide someone to call and connect with in a new city.

“The idea is just for people to get together and talk about U of A," Reynoso says. "That’s what it’s all about — people talking to each other and remembering good times.”



ALUMNI COMMUNITIES

Alumni communities are dedicated to connecting Wildcats with similar cultural backgrounds.

Through retention programs, scholarships and a wide range of programs tailored to their communities, alumni give back by supporting BIPOC students.

Tanisha Price-Johnson ’93 is a third-generation Wildcat who leads the UA Black Alumni (UABA) community. Established in 1982, UABA originally served as a “home away from home” for Black students. Today, members give back through their extensive scholarship program and career networking workshops.

Price-Johnson says that alumni communities are unique because members can relate to shared cultural experiences. They offer more than just an opportunity to socialize; members also can serve as examples for aspiring students.

“A lot of people don’t think they have anything to give, but I think everyone has something to offer," Price-Johnson says. "Sometimes it’s really a conversation; it’s a connection. You never know how that’s going to land on someone.”

Graduation is the finale of a transformative chapter for Wildcats. Cheering on Arizona Athletics as members of the ZonaZoo, late-night study sessions at the Main Library and stargazing with friends on the Mall become treasured moments of the past.

The minute you graduate, you join the University of Arizona alumni family. The first step to getting connected is finding fellow Wildcats.



WILDCAT MENTOR SOCIETY

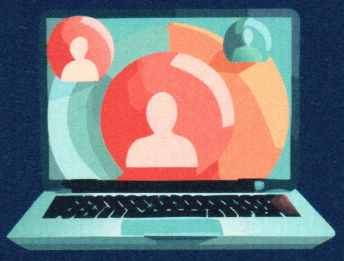
The Wildcat Mentor Society offers a unique experience that connects talented alumni with future leaders.

Through the program, mentors help mentees grow their professional development skills and play a part in their alumni network. The pairs establish strong relationships that extend beyond the program's duration.

Kam Kindschi '20 applied to the Wildcat Mentor Society hoping to meet professionals in the television industry. He was paired with Suzanne Rauscher '93, a top-level producer of unscripted television programs.

Through the program, Rauscher helped Kindschi understand work forms, retirement plans and industry jargon, always just a call away. Rauscher's approach to mentorship gave Kindschi hands-on experience and boosted his confidence, preparing him for his life post-graduation. Today, Kindschi is an unscripted television producer who has worked on the sets of "Master Chef," "Making the Cut" and more.

"I feel like she really set me up for success and being able to understand the path it takes," Kindschi says.



BEAR DOWN NETWORK

Networking does not always have to be through face-to-face interaction, says Marc Acuña '05, who serves as senior diector of alumni and student engagement at the University of Arizona Foundation.

The Bear Down Network is the official online networking platform designed exclusively for Wildcats. With a growing community of over 13,000 members, it lets users express interest in mentorship and job opportunities while growing their Wildcat connections. Create your profile and expand your network today!

"You can find people that are in your profession, you can search for businesses, you can look at events," Acuña says. "It really is our own little Wildcat world of professional career development."

Read more about how these alumni are making a difference in their communities at alumni.arizona.edu/connect.



TOUCHDOWN IN TUCSON

Sportscaster Alex Flanagan returns home to moderate the Fuel Wonder press conference. | By Zoe Montano

Returning to Tucson, sports broadcaster and media agent Alex Flanagan '93 took center stage to host a press conference announcing the University of Arizona's $3 billion fundraising campaign, Fuel Wonder.

Flanagan, a Southern Arizona native, solidified her place in sports journalism by crafting compelling stories for network giants like Fox Sports, NBC Sports and ESPN.

Flanagan comes from a long line of risk-takers. Her mother — also a UArizona graduate — defied societal norms as a cattle rancher in Sonoita, a vocation not often held by women. Flanagan's parents instilled in their children a belief that no dream was unattainable. One brother, Mike Wystrach '02, founded meal-delivery company Freshly, and her other brother, Mark Wystrach '02, is the lead singer of country band Midland. A sister, Audrey Wystrach '90, co-founded Petfolk, a veterinary care provider with clinics in North Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

In 2006, NFL Network welcomed Flanagan as its first full-time female studio host. She covered 12 Super Bowls and a variety of studio programs for the network, including NFL Total Access.

However, it is her experience reporting on five consecutive Olympic games, in places like Beijing and Rio de Janeiro, that Flanagan treasures the most. She was captivated by the stories of athletes typically overlooked in the media, exploring their journeys to the Olympics and the obstacles they'd overcome.

UArizona Homecoming sparked for Flanagan a reflection on both the university's evolution and her own.

"It's so exciting to be back. I think what really sticks out for me is just how much growth this university has had since I graduated 30 years ago," she said at the press conference. "To see and hear the incredible things that are happening on the campus and in the community makes me really proud and excited." ◆



Press conference moderator Alex Flanagan with campaign co-chairs Terry Lundgren and Marianne Cracchiolo Mago
Photo: Chris Richards

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